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ABSTRACT

Provided is an integrated sketch of systematic changes in patterns of political participation and legitimation, and suggestions for where one might begin to look for the sources of such change. Following an introductory section, section 2 reviews time-series data on electoral participation, party identifications, and attitudes toward electoral institutions. Lines of explanation most often found in the research literature are outlined and evidence suggesting that such preferred explanations appear complete is reviewed. Section 3 sets the context for the argument by discussing the expanded activity and social penetration of the central government: the reorganization of the American political system (e.g., the reconfiguration of federalism) and the expansion of public authority and citizenship claims in the U.S. polity. Section 4 presents an explanatory sketch suggesting ways in which shifts in citizen repertories might be tied to institutions of the political environment. Evidence of expanding collective forms of political activity is presented in section 5. The final section discusses implications of the argument for understanding the character of "legitimation" in a changed polity. The report concludes that shifts in electoral participation, the changes in attitudes, and the increasing prominence of collective activity seem to constitute a reorganization of the U.S. political culture: an evolution from the associated politics of the "civic culture" to the claimant politics of a collective action polity. (LH)

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The Expanding State and the U.S. "Civic Culture": The Changing Character of Political Participation and Legitimation in the Post-War U.S. Polity

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Abstract

The period since the publication of Almond and Verba's The Civic Culture has been marked by distinct changes in the American political culture. Shifts in electoral participation, changes in political attitudes, and an increasing prominence of collective political activity constitute a marked departure from the associational politics of the traditional polity. In this paper, we attempt to provide an integrated sketch of systemic changes in patterns of political participation and legitimation, and suggest, in an exploratory fashion, where one might begin to look for the sources of such change. We attempt to follow out, for the American case, a general proposition from comparative political sociology: the character of participation depends on the structure of the polity. Citizen repertoires are tied to the resources, cues, and mobilization sites provided by the institutional context. Thus this paper seeks to illuminate trends in American political activity and attitudes by attending to changes in the organization of the U.S. state and polity.

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1. Introduction

In The Civic Culture, Almond and Verba depicted an activist and associational U.S. polity. But only a few years after the publication of this work, commentators began to speak of declines of electoral participation, political partisanship, and locality-based political activity. "Mass demobilization" has been a dominant theme in writing about the political experience of the past two decades.

Political analysts in the 1980s now confront a number of "puzzles of participation" (Brody, 1978). Voting turnout from 1960-84 showed a decline of about ten percentage points, a drop halted only by the 1984 presidential election. This twenty year decline is part of an apparent -- and much debated -- long-term decrease in the rates of U.S. electoral participation. The same two decade period also reveals evidence of an "apartisan dealignment" (Ginsberg, 1984); reduced loyalty to the two dominant parties, and increasing numbers of self-professed "independents."

These shifts in behaviors and identifications have been accompanied by a widening "confidence gap" in political institutions (Lipset and Schneider, 1983): a steady erosion in impressions of government responsiveness; a pronounced drop in standard survey measures of trust in government; increasingly reported dissatisfaction with government performance; and decreasing concern over which party wins presidential elections. Such findings have occasioned much discussion of political "alienation" and "legitimacy" problems.

But this common imagery of "decline" of participation and legitimation is somewhat misleading. Note some contrasting trends, of equal salience, but perhaps less prominent in commentary. Remaining a moment with attitudes, we find an increase in some measures of personal political efficacy, accompanied perhaps (the evidence is indirect and ambiguous) by increases in political information and issue attention; no apparent changes in political interest; a similar stability in impressions of citizen duty to vote; satisfaction with much of the service provision and expanded responsibilities of government; and high levels of pride in the governing principles of the U.S. political system.

Moreover, one can track the emergence and expanding use of a broad array of collective forms of political participation, whereby individuals undertake political

activity through involvements with organizations. These new forms include (but are not limited to) social movement and protest politics; single-issue mobilization and specialization; organizationally-based court litigation; and administrative lobbying and negotiation.

Together the shifts in electoral participation, the changes in attitudes, and the increasing prominence of collective activity seem to constitute a reorganization of the U.S. political culture: an evolution from the associational politics of the "civic culture" to the claimant politics of a collective action polity.

In this paper, we attempt to describe the trends sketched above as inter-related, systemic shifts -- concentrating especially on collective forms of activity -- and to suggest, in an exploratory way, where one might look for the sources of change. Most treatments of changes in political orientations and activity have been "demographic" in character (Stinchcombe, 1968:3.1), locating changes in properties of individuals or in the proportional makeup of collectivities considered as aggregates of individuals. Relatively neglected in discussions of such political change have been transformations in the <u>institutional environment</u>. In this paper, we attempt to follow out, for the American case, a general and well-known proposition from comparative political sociology: that the character of participation depends on the structure of the polity (as stressed, for example, in the works of Rokkan, Bendix, Tilly, Schattschneider). Citizen participation repertoires are tied to the resources, cues, and activity sites of the institutional context.

Thus this paper seeks to contribute to the task of bringing the study of American politics back into comparative politics and comparative sociology -- where, we must confess, we think it belongs. In addition, it seeks to speak to the reawakened interest in "institutional" analysis (whether it be the "new" or "old" institutionalism) [March and Olson, 1984]. In both attempts we are stimulated by important work in American politics provided very recently by analysts such as L. Brown (1983) and K. Shienbaum (1984); by more well-known studies such as those of Janowitz (1976; 1978), Lowi (1978; 1979), and Heclo (1978); by studies in comparative political sociology, eg by J. Olson (1983); and by recent theoretical developments in organizational analysis (Scott, 1981; Meyer and Scott, 1983).

The paper proceeds in the following manner. Section 2 (this introduction being section 1) reviews time-series data on electoral participation, party identifications, and attitudes toward electoral institutions. It outlines lines of explanation most often found in the research literature, and reviews evidence suggesting that such proferred explanations appear incomplete.

Section 3 sets the context for our own argument by discussing the expanded activity and social penetration of the central government; the reorganization of the American political system (eg, the reconfiguration of federalism); and the expansion of public authority and citizenship claims in the U.S. polity.

Section 4 presents the explanatory sketch of this paper, suggesting ways in which shifts in citizen repertoires might be tied to the institutions of the political environment. Section 5 presents evidence of expanding collective forms of political activity. The conclusion, Section 6, discusses implications of the argument for understanding the character of "legitimation" in a changed polity.

We should add that the paper does not present any evidence uniquely collected by us, nor does it provide any primary or secondary statistical analysis. Rather it draws on, integrates, and reinterprets a broad range of evidence and literature. But the paper is not a literature review. It represents an argument.

2. Electoral Participation, Partisanship and the Confidence Gap: Trends and Explanations

This section begins with a discussion of the trends in electoral behavior and related political orientations. We believe that these patterns of participation, partisanship and attitudes are related and that they are driven by a distinct set of institutional processes. The second part of this section then looks at the current lines of reasoning that have been introduced to account for introduced to account for these patterns. We review three kinds of accounts, which we call demographic, contextual, and institutional interpretations.

2.1 Trends in Electoral Behavior and Political Orientations

a. Short Term Turnout: Beginning in the 1960s, voter turnout has declined by about 10 percentage points nationally in all regions except the south, where turnout has been increasing since the 1940s. In presidential elections electoral participation has fallen from a high of

64% in 1960 to 53% in 1984.* In one estimate, 18 million former voters dropped out of the electorate during the 1970s (see Cavanagh, 1981:56). This decline has occurred despite the contemporaneous reduction of barriers to voting, the reduction in the voting age, and the striking increases in educational attainment in the polity (Burnham, 1984; Hansen and Rosenstone, 1984; Rosenstone and Wolfinger, 1978; Converse, 1972; Brody, 1978; Luttbeg, 1984).

This figure for aggregate decline in the most basic form of participation, however, conceals several important kinds of variation. First, there is wide variation in turnout decline among the states. Some heavy industrial states, such as Illinois, have lost as much as 20% of their electorates during the 1960-80 period (Luttbeg, 1984). This finding holds for electoral races at both the local and national levels. Secondly, there are episodic variations over time in voter turnout. In the most comprehensive study to date, Hansen and Rosenstone (1984) found that there are contextual effects of the political process on voting behavior and six other kinds of political action: writing congressmen; attending local meetings; working for a candidate or party; giving money to a campaign; trying to influence how others vote; and signing petitions. Voters are more responsive politically when their interest is aroused by highly politicized national issues, tight races, and presidential election years, for example. Lastly, the dropout in voting is concentrated among specific subpopulations of the electorate. Non-voting has become a habit among the poor, the less educated, working class groups, and those who are distant from candidates in terms of issue positions (see Burnham, 1984; Shienbaum, 1984; Zipp, 1985).

b. Long Term Trends: The long term trend in turnout has clearly been one of declining participation, though there are sharp differences between scholars regarding the meaning of this change (Kleppner, 1982; Burnham, 1970; Converse, 1972; 1974; Clubb et al., 1980). While Burnham (1970; 1975) sees dealignment and alienation as explanations of the post-1896 declines, Converse (1974) sees Progressive era reforms as the cause. The introduction of the Australian ballot and registration requirements, Converse argues, reduced corruption, deflated the falsely inflated electoral statistics, and as an unintended by-product may actually have deterred some legitimate voters.

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* Although the percentage of adults voting in the 1984 election was slightly higher than the 1980 figure, the proportion of registered voters who cast ballots declined for the sixth straight presidential election.

Regarding rates of participation, Kleppner (1982) estimates that the turnout rates between 1846 and 1896, i.e. before the great re-alignment at the turn of the century, were in the 80-90% range for both local and national elections. Since that period there has been a long term decline of participation, punctuated with several periods of re-mobilization. During the re-alignment of the '30s there was an increase in turnout that lasted through the '50s, though voting never reached the historic highs of the pre-1896 period. Secondly, starting in the '40s voters in the South have been mobilized, so that the South is the one area in the nation that is experiencing an increase in voting participation.

c. Other Electoral Behaviors: Hansen and Rosenstone (1984) present trend figures for six behaviors they studied. Their data allow us to see if there are any directional trends, apart from episodic fluctuations. For the six behaviors other than voting, inspection reveals three apparent trends for the 1952-82 period (none of which show major changes of magnitude): (1) attempts to influence how others vote have increased during presidential election years, from roughly 28% to 35% of the electorate; (2) working for a candidate or party during presidential elections declined from 6% to 3.5%; and (3) giving money to a campaign during presidential elections has declined from 11.5% to 8.5% of the electorate. No trend is apparent for the other three behaviors over the 1974-82 period for which evidence is available (writing congressmen, attending local meetings and signing petitions).

d. Attachments to Political Parties: The major trend in this area can be summarized in one phrase: partisan de-alignment (Flanagan and Dalton, 1984). This process holds for Western Europe generally but nowhere is the trend as sharp as it is in the U.S., where parties are not policy oriented (comparatively speaking) and where their legitimacy in the culture has always been problematic (see Shefter, 1977). De-alignment is perhaps more likely under these circumstances, particularly during a period when parties have been stripped of many of their political functions, e.g. candidate selection (McCleskey, 1981).

The trends in this area are easily summarized, but much less easily interpreted. First, there has been a decline in party attachment and in the intensity of partisanship (Miller and Wattenberg, 1983; Converse, 1976; Markus, 1982; Ladd, 1978). Since the '60s the number of Independents has been growing such that they now compose almost 40% of the electorate (Miller and Wattenberg, 1983). The intensity of party commitment has also eroded over this period; 25% of adults now have a strong party identification as opposed to a third in the 1950s. This drop-off in party identification

between 1952 and 1980 appears to be due largely to generational replacement (Abramson, 1983:118). Secondly, the party volatility of the electorate has increased, particularly since 1964, so that party affiliation is less directly connected to voting (Nie et. al. 1979; Abramson, 1983; see also Lubell, 1970). There is less inter-election stability in party voting and more ticket-splitting within elections (Janowitz, 1976: 88ff). Furthermore, more voters now delay their voting decisions until later in campaigns (Flanagan and Dalton, 1984:16).

Third, there is more issue specialization among the electorate and more ranking of candidates on their stands on particular issues (Nie et al., 1979; Miller, 1981; Abramson, 1983; see also Shienbaum, 1984). Fourth, social class based voting has declined in the U.S. and also in Western Europe -- an indication that the old socioeconomic cleavages are no longer as salient as they once were (Inglehart, 1983). As Flanagan and Dalton (1984:10-11) note, much of this decline in social class voting occurs because of generational replacement, parallel to the decline after 1896: the propensity for class voting is disappearing among the younger generations (Kleppner and Baker, 1983; Cavanagh, 1983-84). Fifth, the trend in declining partisanship means that electors are now more candidate centered (Kinder and Abelson, 1980). "Vote the man, not the party" is now an increasingly accurate description of how voters act.

Interpretations of these trends vary, and there is evidence to support a variety of views. There has been an unmistakable decline in the salience of the old cleavage structures, and some evidence of the emergence of new cleavages in the electorate organized around age and education (Inglehart, 1977, 1983; Flanagan and Dalton, 1984).* Anti-party and anti-bureaucracy sentiment has accompanied this change in the U.S. (Lipset and Schneider, 1983), as exemplified by the "new politics" movements as well as by the older Wallace movement in the early 1970s (Shefter, 1977, 1984; Lubell, 1970). What is not clear is whether this de-alignment is more than temporary, and if so, whether a new alignment is in the offing. A number of commentators regard the de-alignment thesis with skepticism. There are others who see some kind of corporatist arrangements as more likely than a new alignment (see Shefter, 1984).

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* Flanagan and Dalton, for example, comment that social conflict begins to occur between "value-sharing communities" rather than economically or functionally defined groups (1983:13). Conflict moves from "cleavages defined by social groups to value cleavages that identify only communities of like-minded individuals" (ibid.:19).

One matter, however, is clear. The trends in party attachments we have described do not mean that the electorate has become de-politicized (see Converse, 1972; Janowitz [1976:85-95] has made this point persuasively and we strongly agree with him). The next section presents evidence on trends in attitudes and shows that however skeptical voters are of government, they have retained interest in public affairs though many have become "apartisan" (see Miller and Wattenberg, 1983; Flanagan and Dalton, 1984:16).

d. Locally-Organized Community Participation: Changes in the structure of urban communities have also affected the salience and importance of locally-organized participation. Urban population shifts, the increasing mobility of urban populations, and the decline of neighborhoods as centers of community interaction have all acted to reduce the salience of locally-organized political involvements (see Taub et al., 1977). Rising education levels of the population may also accentuate the cultural demise of purely local issues in the minds of urban electorates. Research on the political interests of urban voters has found them less interested in purely local issues than people who live in smaller cities and small towns (Fischer, 1975).

These changes do not signal the demise of local political action but rather represent a change in its character. What has changed, we believe, is not the level of local political participation but the fact that such action -- and the local groups that produce it -- are now more highly integrated into regional and national issue networks and communities of discourse. Many of the lead issues such groups deal with, for example, have become nationalized by the press and TV. Organizational networks have also become regional and national in scope. Furthermore, many local groups owe their continued existence to legal and legislative mandates and subsidies from non-local sources (see Hansen, 1985). The War on Poverty, for instance, lead to the mobilization and creation of community groups that had not existed before (see Fainstein, and Fainstein, 1974; Bergesen, 1980). Urban renewal and development legislation frequently mandate community political participation and thereby create new local groups or politically subsidize groups already in existence (Taub et al., 1977).

e. Public Attitudes -- The "Confidence Gap": What is striking about the trends in public attitudes is that the changes are much more dramatic than the trends in behavior that we have reviewed. While attitudinal and behavioral patterns are consistent with one another, the attitudinal shifts are sharper and exhibit steadier trends. It seems

as if voter depictions of the political process lead their actual behavior. We will later argue that this pattern arises because voters' perceptions and accounts are not a direct reflection of their own experience but instead result from "sampling" of national experience as it is presented by the media, political leaders, and the local networks in which citizens are embedded. Such depicted reality does not necessarily reflect very closely actual trends and social structure. (We will return to this matter).

One of the major trends between 1958 and 1983, which Lipset and Schneider (1983a; 1983b) have so convincingly documented, is the steady erosion of confidence in government and other major institutions, e.g. big business and big labor. For example, the percentage of the electorate reporting trust in big government in Washington ("most of the time" or "just about always") has dropped from 75% in 1958 to about 25% in 1980 (Abramson, 1983:12). The Reagan administration appears to have reversed this trend, but only among the true believers, i.e. among Reaganites (Lipset and Schneider, 1983b). No institution, not even medicine or the military, escapes this trend unscathed. Furthermore, this "confidence gap" is present in all sectors of the population (see also Abramson, 1983; Janowitz, 1976).

Secondly, a parallel trend in "alienation" measures exists for the period between 1964 and 1976 (Brody, 1978; Wright, 1976; Abramson, 1983). A majority of respondents now say that "public officials don't care what [the public] thinks" and more than a majority say that "people like me have no influence on what government does" (Brody, 1978; Converse, 1972: 326ff; see also Kleppner, 1982:). The public is also less likely to think that party incumbency matters (Brody, 1978). While this attitude may be changing, as Sundquist (1983-84) argues, it seems clear that citizens see fewer distinctions between the parties, and have less confidence in them as institutions, than in the late '50s and '60s (Lipset and Schneider, 1983).

However, there are important counter-trends. The public is generally satisfied with the public welfare programs government has undertaken, and if anything wants more of them (Crotty and Jacobsen, 1980; Brown, 1983). Furthermore, as Brown notes (1983), both parties are committed to existing social welfare programs, so that in fact government welfare expenditures and grants to the states and cities have been increasing, even under Reagan (see also Lowi, 1978). Secondly, while the public has lost confidence in the capabilities of congress and other institutions and doubts its ability to influence leaders, that same public reports high levels of satisfaction with the particularistic services they receive from public officials and congressmen (Davidson and Oleszak, 1981). Thirdly, there is good evidence that there has not been

systematic decline in the norm that it is a "citizen's duty" to vote (Brody, 1978; Shienbaum, 1984; Miller, Miller and Schneider, 1980). Large percentages of the electorate (80-90%) feel that it is their citizenship obligation to vote. Furthermore, these figures have held steady during the 30-year dramatic widening of the "confidence gap" (Miller, Miller and Schneider, 1980: 288). Fourth, reported interest in politics, according to survey measures, has not changed between 1960 and 1980 (Miller, Miller and Schneider, 1980: 307; Abramson, 1983; Converse, 1972: 326ff). Fifth, there has been a long term increase among the public in perceived political efficacy. When asked whether "politics are getting too complicated for the average person to understand" and whether "voting is the only way to influence politicians," an increasing number of respondents disagree (Converse, 1972: 326ff; Abramson, 1980; 1983: ch. 10).

In these respects, then, the "civic culture" is alive and well, though its behavioral manifestations have changed since Almond and Verba reported their results (1963).

2.2 Explanations of Electoral Trends

How does one interpret this evidence? Brody in 1978 commented that "the shrinking level of participation in American national elections confounds our expectations and is at odds with the explanations of turnout offered by available theories of political behavior."

Three lines of argument have been advanced. We label them "demographic", "contextual" and "institutional" ones. We present and review them briefly below.

a. Demographic Explanations: Demographic arguments focus on changes in properties of individuals and feature individuals or aggregates of individuals as units of analysis. Demographic explanations are primarily those in which "a causal force is assumed to be proportional to the number of people of a certain kind" (Stinchcombe, 1968:60). Such explanations of electoral trends tend to look for individual-level effects of shifts in attitudes on behaviors (e.g. Abramson, 1983: ch. 16) or for aggregate-level effects of changes in individual properties such as mean levels of educational attainment (e.g. see the discussion in Converse, 1974). Demographic accounts often do provide instructive profiles of population shifts in participation. For example, Cavanagh (1983-84) shows that while both voter registration and voting have fallen off between 1964 and 1976, they have fallen most sharply among lower social class groups. As a result, class differentials in participation are becoming more pronounced.

Demographic arguments run into evidence problems. First, all population groups (except blacks, notwithstanding quite different demographic profiles) have experienced a decline in electoral participation, though the dropout is sharpest among lower social class groups (Kleppner, 1982; Brody, 1978; Cavanagh, 1981-82). Note, in connection, that Luttbeg (1984) could not explain state by state variation in voting turnout by attending to the social characteristics of their populations.

Furthermore, these declines in participation have occurred independently of changes in residency requirements and other barriers to voting that have often been cited as causes of low voting turnout (Burnham, 1970). Many of these barriers have been dramatically altered by the 1964 Civil Rights Act and by various court decisions regarding residency requirements (Brody, 1978). Arguments about the negative influence of registration requirements are also not supported by recent evidence. For example, turnout has declined across states independently of their registration systems (Phillips and Blackman, 1975).*

Second, the mechanisms demographic arguments employ to explain low participation are not supported by evidence, either for the population as a whole or for subgroups. Most demographic arguments point to some attitude set such as alienation or lack of trust to account for lowered participation. For a survey of Indianapolis adults, conducted in 1968, Olson (1983) shows that attitude items associated with the civic culture are not predictive of political participation for any of six items: knowledge of issues and having opinions; being interested in politics; voting; voluntary organizational participation; partisanship; or participating in government either by contacting local, state or national officials or by serving on boards or commissions. Similarly, Kleppner (1982), using national survey data from the 1960s, '70s and '80s, shows that alienation and sense of personal efficacy are not effective predictors of participation levels (Kleppner, 1982). Hansen and Rosenstone (1984) reach similar conclusions using time-series data. In fact, one of the seeming paradoxes that plagues this research is that individuals' sense of personal efficacy has been increasing, while their participation has been declining (see Brody, 1978; Janowitz, 1976: 94-95; Flanagan and Dalton, 1984).

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* Luttbeg (1984) shows that with the exception of seven of the states of the deep south, turnout has declined among all the remaining 43 states between 1960-1982 in presidential, congressional and gubernatorial elections. Recent participation declines cannot be attributed to legal barriers to voting (see also Zinser and Dawson, 1979).

Third, demographic arguments share one important theoretical weakness. They typically fail to distinguish individual level processes from collective level ones. Education provides one of the best examples of this confusion. Decades of voting research have shown that in the U.S., an individual's educational attainment is one of the best predictors of voting and other kinds of political activity. Researchers therefore tend to assume that aggregate levels of education in the population operate the same way and are surprised to find that they do not (Converse, 1972; see Brody,1978). The American median educational level has been steadily increasing but electoral participation rates are not similarly increasing, contrary to what one would expect according to demographic imagery. Furthermore, Kim et al. (1975) show that at the state level median education levels had a slight negative effect on state-level voter turnout in the 1960 presidential election, when other characteristics of states were held constant. Similar results have been shown to hold for cities (Alford and Lee, 1968). This evidence suggests that aggregate education levels may operate differently than individual educational attainment on electoral participation.

b. Electoral and Economic Contexts: These arguments focus on immediate events, situational aspects of the electoral process, e.g. presidential vs. off-year elections, and characteristics of the socioeconomic environment, e.g. the level of unemployment. The most relevant, and best, empirical work we know of in this spirit is that of Hansen and Rosenstone (1984). They convincingly demonstrate, using national aggregate data for the period 1952-1980, that voters' participation is influenced by immediate cognitive cues from the political process itself. Attention and interest are heightened, for example, by hotly contested races. They convincingly show that characteristics of electoral races and the surrounding socioeconomic environment, e.g. recessions and the threat of unemployment, have effects on aggregate participation levels for seven measures of participation (which we have previously described). Hansen and Rosenstone recognize the declining voting participation over their study period but argue that this decline can be accounted for adequately by attending to three factors: increasing economic instability; variation -- and reduction -- in political stimulation; and change in the age distribution of the electorate. They find no evidence that attitudinal shifts are implicated in reduced voting rates (e.g. any cross sectional associations that might obtain between efficacy and activity levels do not hold for over-time trends in aggregate patterns).

We find this analysis to be forceful and compelling, and wish to build on it. Three context-setting points are in order. First, recall that the analysis under consideration is based upon aggregate statistics. Thus the

time-series results obtained do not reveal the constellation of subpopulation-specific participation profiles that, taken together, constitute the aggregate pattern. Most arguments about trends in electoral behavior are in fact framed in terms of involvement or withdrawal rates of specific populations subgroups (see Burnham, 1978; Cavanagh, 1983-84; Kleppner, 1982; Shienbaum, 1984). From Hansen and Rosenstone's aggregate time-series analysis one might draw support, for example, for both Burnham's (1970; 1984) "permanent exclusion" argument and for arguments that emphasize the mobilizing potential of the existing electoral system under appropriate contextual conditions. To investigate these ideas, one needs in principle to integrate aggregate and individual levels of analysis.

Second, return to Hansen and Rosenstone's emphasis on the salience of episodic variation in electoral competition, stimulation and novelty for participation. Analysts need to probe behind these episodic features to explore whether there is any clear trending revealed -- e.g. a general secular decline in political stimulation or mobilization, or subpopulation-specific trends in such stimulation (a possibility that Hansen and Rosenstone themselves consider [1984:40-41]). Is there any "structure" behind the changes in political salience that Hansen and Rosenstone, among others, report? Some commentators have suggested that there is (e.g. Janowitz, 1976 -- to be discussed below.)

Third, we wish to pursue the thought that shifts in the character and alignment in American political institutions might be implicated in structuring not only electoral-based participation, but also revealed in the attitudinal shifts sketched above and in the shifts in repertoires of political activity yet to be discussed (see section 5 below). Such institutional structuring, for example, might help to unravel the peculiar connections between trends in attitudes and trends in electoral behaviors that Hansen and Rosenstone, and others, report (e.g. Brody, 1978; Abramson, 1983).

c. Institutional Arguments: There are several kinds of institutional arguments but they share a common feature: they focus on the long-term structure of the political system rather than on its demography or situational features. All argue that there have been long-term structural changes in participatory systems, though they disagree on the nature of these changes. We review briefly the major versions of these arguments.

1. Bureaucratic Politics and Corporatism:

These arguments represent politics as a game in which bureaucracies and highly organized interest groups are the major actors (Offe, 1981; 1983; Downs, 1967; Allison, 1971). The American versions focus on the interplay between

government bureaucracies that have no grassroots support or popular constituencies. Allison's (1971) discussion of the federal government presents such a depiction. In this political game, "natural persons" have lost power by ceding it to corporate political actors (see especially, Coleman, 1974; 1982). Sensing their actual powerlessness, individuals not affiliated with corporate actors withdraw their participation, so the field of play is left to the latter.

European arguments are similar in character. But the processes they attend to are -- not surprisingly -- different ones. In Offe's (1981; 1983) view, centralized states operate as selection mechanisms. Ministries and other officials prefer to deal with a few, well organized interest groups rather than with large numbers of small ones. As a result, ministries "invite" particular well-organized groups to participate in discussions of policy and at the same time exclude and discourage others from participating. This process encourages the formation of "peak" organizations, e.g. organizations that represent all unions or industries in a sector. The result is that the state and its agents determine which groups in society will have status as public actors (Offe, 1983).

These are useful ideas, though as they stand they are not particularly helpful in accounting for important electoral phenomena. The bureaucratic politics model has not been helpful in accounting for the speed of Congressional action on some issues for which there is a relative absence of strong, organized interests (Brody, 1978). Nor has it been deployed in a way that is all that useful in explaining the extraordinary mobilization of parts of the electorate during the '45-84 period (e.g. blacks) or the new collective forms that political action has taken (e.g.social protest politics, the rise of single issue movements, the explosion of business political organizations, the emergence of public interest lobbies, etc.).

These theories do help to explain the withdrawal from participation of sectors of the electorate through selection and crowding out processes. And they may help to explain some of the trends in changing attitudes of the electorate, as we will suggest below.

ii. Institutional Design and Political Exclusion:

Burnham (1970) contends that long term changes in the design of the political system have resulted in the permanent exclusion of significant minorities of the population from electoral politics. Like Lowi (1967), the changes Burnham (1970) has in mind are those Progressive reforms that undermined the growth of local party organizations and the representation of important interests, viz. working class

welfare issues, in the political system. Burnham (1970; 1975; 1978) has concluded that large segments of the electorate have been permanently de-activated. His landmark work (1970) showed that on a number of important indicators, political participation and partisanship have fallen off over a long period, punctuated by the 1930s re-alignment, which has been un-ravelling. Underlying this depiction is the suggestion that the political system has been in some degree consciously designed to exclude those issues that would undermine the regime of governnment-business ties.

This analysis and thesis have been sharply criticized by Converse (1974). Much of the argument has to do with the character and quality of evidence: the 19th century voting statistics, Converse claims, are simply inaccurate. The turnout percentages are grossly inflated because the numerator of this fraction is inflated. As the corruption surrounding 19th century voting practices was eliminated by Progressive reforms, the statistics became more accurate and reflective of the real population rates of electoral participation. Converse (1974) also shows how registration requirements and voting reforms, i.e. the Australian ballot, may have influenced the other measures Burnham (1970) used to support his thesis, i.e. split-ticket voting, voter volatility, drop off in midterm elections. Converse thus argues that there has in fact been a secular <u>increase</u> in electoral participation up to the '60s.

We certainly cannot adjudicate this argument.* We simply wish to note, at this stage, that both Burnham and Converse agree that institutionally-based changes have driven changes in the character and degree of citizen participation. They disagree on the sources of institutional change.

iii. Welfare State Regimes:

For our final example of institutional arguments consider

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* Allen and Allen (1981) dispute a major part of Converse's (1984) argument that corruption was rife in the 19th century and declined to negligible proportions by 1920. They note that analysts have not provided anything but anecdotal accounts of corruption rates and that these are probably exaggerated. They show in fact that most of the charges about corruption were made by political foes of urban machines and that they continued to be made up until the 1930s -- long after the reforms that figure prominently in Converse's account.

Recent attention has turned to the denominator of the turnout statistics. Shortridge (1981) argues that the 19th century census counts can't be trusted. He holds that the census became more accurate sometime after WW I. But for an opposing view see Kleppner, 1982: appendix 1.

Janowitz's (1976; 1978) discussion of welfare state politics. Janowitz associates the expansion of welfare-related expenditures and institutions with increased political conflict, transformed political affiliations of socio-economic groups, and the emergence of weak political regimes. (Janowitz's weak regimes are executive incumbents without majority parliamentary support: for the U.S. the 1952 election marked the emergence of such a trend.) Weak political regimes, in this view, produce the "ungovernability" and "legitimation" difficulties that have received so much attention.

This argument raises directly the issue of changes in political institutions following from the institutionalization of the welfare state.

We propose to attend to this issue in the next section (Section 3). There we describe the consolidation of the welfare state and the changes in political culture that it entails. In Section 4, we draw upon and attempt to develop the contextual and institutional arguments just reviewed.

3. Changes in American Political Institutions

We wish to sketch, in some detail, some post-war changes in the character of the U.S. political system that we think are particularly consequential for citizen political activities and orientations. Many specific features that we will call attention to are frequently addressed, but they are less frequently considered together as inter-related facets of a political system. We are interested both in changes that reveal, for many observers, a "new American political system" (King, 1978); and in institutional continuities that stand out when one surveys the cross-national landscape.

In pursuing institutional change, it is useful to make simple distinctions between three possible locations of change -- change in:

* the central government -- for the American case, Federal-level executive, legislative, administrative, judicial, and coercive institutions;

* the governmental system -- central government, taken together with subcentral governmental institutions;

* the polity -- the broader system of national, public collective action, and public perception of political affairs.

For illustration, consider the pictures of the 19th and early 20th century state that recent research has given us. The American system was for some time peculiarly "governmentless" (eg Rose, 1980a); a system of "courts and parties" with patronage linkages to civil society and without a well-developed administrative core (see eg Skowronek, 1982; Skocpol and Ikenberry, 1982; and esp. Bright, 1984). Organizationally, the system represented a "Tudor polity" with "fusion of functions and division of powers" (Huntington, 1968). Much public collective action was organized by local government instrumentalities, or through governmental delegation to private actors. The political system often relied on the construction and manipulation of property rights as a means for establishing authority and resolving disputes (see Horwitz, 1980; Bright, 1984).

The traditional American polity was the quintessential representative of "politics" rather than "administration."

One commentary on this point can stand for many others: U.S. government "is permeated with politics. This is because our constitutional structure and our traditions afford individuals manifold opportunities not only to bring their special interests to the attention of public officials but also -- and this is the important thing -- to compel officials to bargain and to make compromises. ... There is virtually no sphere of 'administration' apart from politics" (Banfield and Wilson, 1963:1). If a "statist" system is considered, as in one useful conceptualization, as the fusion of executive, bureaucracy, and legislature into one governmental collectivity (Nettl, 1968), then the American "state" historically as been a weak one. But the U.S. polity, the national society's capacity for collective action, has been quite strong (see Lipset, 1963). This combination of weak state and strong polity has been of major consequence for forms of citizen action and orientation, and for changes in these forms.

We wish to characterize political changes that amount to, we think, an "expanded state" (an imperfect phrase, but one that may do as well as any other). But this expanded state remains a very distinctive one. We will not claim, for example, that the U.S. system converges upon the so-called European model(s) (cp. Lowi, 1978).* Much nationalization and expansion of public activity occurs, we will stress, outside of the central state apparatus, in the broader polity. Nevertheless, we wish to look first at changes in the central government and governmental system; we then go on to explore prominent shifts in the polity.

3.1 Changes in the Central Government and Governmental System

In considering changes in state systems, comparative political sociology has come to focus usefully on the character of: (i) state penetration of civil society; (ii) social penetration and constraint upon the state; (iii) administrative capabilities of central government; including the organizational and interest structure of central government; and (iv) the operational styles and policy

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* We will not in this paper attend directly to causes of institutional change. We imagine both endogenous and exogenous forces to be implicated in the changes we focus upon: expansion of citizenship claims and "publicness" in the polity are likely due in part to "endogenous" institutionalized processes of reform (a la T. H. Marshall); while changes in the world geomilitary and economic position of the U.S. have changed the selection pressures on the governmental system. (Eg, the rise to hegemonic status and the domestic role of the "permanent arms economy.")

mechanisms of government. With these features in mind, we wish to highlight four post-war changes in the U.S. state system (a-d below).

a. Increasing command over social resources.

The "big government" theme has often been sounded in discussions of the post-war state. But it is worth recalling a few central features of the expansion of governmental resources and personnel. The resource trends reflected in government statistics,* reviewed below, reveal large increases in governmental expenditure (and revenue), and an associated heightening of direct citizen dependence on government as a paymaster as well as a provider of various welfare benefits. This increased expenditure and activity has not been accompanied by a parallel increase in Federal governmental staffing: central employment stabilized around 1950, while state and local government staffing continued to grow. (Please bear with us through the next few rather dry paragraphs.)

Expenditures. The overall "cost of public policy" multiplied about 2.5 times (in real terms) for the U.S. between 1950 and 1976 (while a substantial increase, the rate lies at the low end of the OECD range) [data from Rose and Peters, 1978:253]. Federal expenditures moved from a level of about $280 billion in 1950 to about $730 billion in 1980 (in 1982 dollars) [data from Page, 1983:61]. Total governmental expenditures rose from 27% of national income in 1949 to 42% in 1976; and represented 32% of GNP in 1979. The U.S. polity is no longer comparatively "governmentless" when assessed in this way -- the 32% figure compares, eg, with values of 31% for Italy, 33% for West Germany, 46% for UK, and 64% for Sweden) [data from Nutter, 1978, and King and Gurr, 1983].

In one estimate, "domestic" expenditures increased from 63% of total governmental expenditures in 1949 to 83% for 1976 -- in relation to "external" expenditures for defense and transfer payments to foreigners (Nutter, 1978:15). Federal domestic social welfare expenditures as a percentage of total budgets were 28% in 1960, 37% in 1970 and accounted for over half of expenditure in 1980 (52%); while expenditures on "public goods" (so-called indivisible

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* We will update these statistics, and others throughout the paper, in a future draft.

expenditures), in one estimate, dropped from 75% in 1960 to 51% in 1980 (Page, 1983:64,102).*

On the revenue side, total governmental taxation reached 31% of GDP in 1980; the OECD average was 37%. Note that four OECD countries fell below the U.S. level (Italy, Portugal, Ireland, Japan); while higher values were found (eg) in West Germany (37%), Britain (36%), and Sweden (50%) [Page, 1983:62].

Citizen dependence. These aggregate figures reflect substantial increases in the dependence of U.S. citizens on direct welfare benefits (see the estimates of coverage by Rose and Peters, 1978:257). Various new forms of public welfare expenditures -- such as education and mortgage assistance and infrastructural (eg transport) expenditure -- tied middle social strata to central government (see eg Janowitz, 1978:145 and passim.). Most major segments of the U.S. populace received some pork barrel stake in defense-related production and expenditure (Shefter, 1977:248). Direct dependence upon government for takehome pay -- taking into account central and local government employees, employees of government-owned industries, and employees of private suppliers to government -- reached about 29% of total employment in 1976 (estimate of Rose and Peters, 1978:258). This value is near those of several large European countries -- due to the U.S.' particularly large "covert public sector" (ibid.).

Employment. Total government employment as a percentage of the labor force was 16% in 1979, a significantly greater proportion (eg) than for Canada (3%), Japan (7%), or Switzerland (4%), while less than (eg) Belgium (23%), Denmark (25%), or Sweden (34%) [ILO, 1983]. Total Federal employment increased dramatically between 1930-1940 and again from 1940-1950, with a sharply reduced rate of increase after this time; in 1950 this employment was at 2.5 million, and in 1977 about 2.7 million (from Nachmias and Rosenbloom, 1980:39).

b. Increased state penetration of society.

The descriptive statistics just presented reflect greatly expanded central state activity and penetration of society. Analysts are fond of pointing out, eg, that the U.S. Governmental Manual shows bureaucratic agencies with mandates in Abaca production and adult education to waterways, weather, women's, and youth issues; and they note

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* Due to imprecision and overlap in categorization, the figures for the two series need not be limited to 100% totals.

that the size of the Federal Register tripled in size in one decade, from 1968-78 (from about 20 thousand pages to 60 thousand) [Shienbaum, 1984].*

The increased state intervention amounts to an enlargement of governmental "objects of control" (Lowi, 1979): from concern with the character of relationships between private actors (eg fairness of competition), the qualities of commodities in commerce, and the structure of private relationships, to "systemic" concern for the overall environment for conduct (Lowi's instructive typology: Lowi, 1979:98ff). The increasing economic intervention; the "New Regulation" of the '60s and '70s; the pronounced increase in the discretion and detail of court interventions (think, for a recent example, of the AT&T case) are prominent examples of this expanded domain.

Lowi usefully calls attention to the import of the increasing discretionary character of Federal activity: eg, discretionary investment guarantee programs, reaching magnitudes equivalent to 16% of GNP in 1978 (from 12% in 1956) [Lowi, 1979:288]; and Federal revenue sharing and block grants to localities (Lowi, 1978; 1979). Both policy instruments have a clientelistic character, tying private actors or local officials to the governmental center.

The expanded penetration of the central government is likely behind an increased citizen perception of Federal government presence. Depth interviews have revealed striking citizen propensities to focus on central government as a source of both rights and benefits (see Lubell, 1970), and survey responses certainly show increased prominence of "big government" in citizen images of the polity (see Lipset and Schneider, 1983). For example, percentages of respondents saying the the Federal government has a "great deal of effect" on personal life have increased significantly from 1960-80 (Nachmias and Rosenbloom, 1980:240ff; Lipset and Schneider, 1983).

c. Increasing Centralization of Government Activity: the Reconfiguration of U.S. Federalism

While there is much scholarly debate on the character of the reconfigured U.S. federal structure, there is general agreement, at least, that the '70s were marked by the development of (in one review article's terms) an

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* The yearly output of Federal Register pages during WWII reached about 18 thousand, a level not reached again until circa 1964. The extraordinary increase in Register pages did not begin until circa 1970. (Source: Boorman and Levitt, 1981).

"extraordinary intergovernmental interdependence" (Beam, Conlan, and Walker, 1983:248). The Federal-level proportion of total government expenditures has stayed about constant post-1950 (in the high 60s % [Nutter, 1978]). But increasing central transfers and new regulatory mandates tie subcentral governments more closely to the center (Beam, 1981; Lowi, 1979). So-called "preemptive" laws have been important in this shift. The center has greatly augmented its authority to dispense social resources, establishing entitlements for individuals and groups, leaving implementation and financing arrangements to local and state levels. The Great Society programs, to take one set of examples, have been depicted as a concerted attack upon entrenched municipal bureaucracies and interest alignments (Shefter, 1977:245,252).

Central grants as a percentage of state and local expenditure amounted to 10% in 1950 and 26% in 1979 (if only local expenditures are considered, the 1972-79 period itself shows a jump from 39% - 49%) [Ripley and Franklin, 1980:12; King and Gurr, 1983:23]. Focussing on welfare expenditures, the central proportion of spending increased markedly from 1950-76, from 44-68% of public assistance, 42-82% of social insurance, and 39-56% of "other" categories (Lowi, 1979:209).

But these figures, while instructive, still do not convey the character of the realignment of central and subcentral institutions. Leadership and agenda-setting in many policy areas have passed decidedly to the center in the post-war period: in one depiction, the U.S. has moved from a federal to a "decentralized national system" (Schechter, 1982:61; see also the papers in Schreiber, 1984). In some instances one does find <u>increasing</u> localism tied to broader central grants, and thus some "devolution" -- but note that this localism is precisely understood as a devolution from the (symbolically sovereign) center.*

The availability of Federal welfare and urban programs stimulated the formation of local political "growth coalitions" between Republican businessmen and Democratic mayors, organized around the restructuring of urban land use (Mollenkopf, 1983). And there is evidence that a wide variety of local community and neighborhood political organizations were formed or resuscitated in response to Federal legal mandates, associated (eg) with urban redevelopment programs (Fainstein and Fainstein, 1974; Taub et al., 1977). Federal support of aerospace, electronics, and energy industries also occasioned the massive sectoral

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* And citizens are generally more aware of central government than local governments (see eg Jennings and Ziegler, 1970; Nachmias and Rosenbloom, 1980:240ff).

shifts represented by the economic and political rise of the Sunbelt (see esp. Mollenkopf, 1983).

d. At the center: Toward an administrative state?

Is the governmental system transforming from the United States to the United State? (In Lowi's words, 1978.)

There are some trends that might lead one to think so. The post-war institutionalization of a massive military and national security establishment, and the allied "permanent arms economy," certainly represent an order-of-magnitude jump in the U.S. system's "stateness" (see eg Shefter, 1977).

Consider also changes in the organization of central government. While changes in the relative power of central institutions are much debated (cp. Lowi, 1979 vs. Huntington, 1981, on shifts in the relative power of Congress and the Presidency), there are some relatively clear changes in the division of labor between governmental branches. The new alignment does have somewhat more of an "administrative" cast.

Take the Presidency and Congress. Relations between Presidency and populace have become increasingly plebiscitary (Lowi, 1979; see also Sundquist, 1981), with the Presidency serving as a symbolic location of a general will. The expanded EOP* takes a leading role in program initiation and coordination, with the Congress' policy activities assuming a more reactive character. Much Congressional policy-making takes the form of "rationalizing politics" (Brown, 1983): trying to coordinate, reorganize, and integrate initiatives from the executive branch; and attempting to deal with unintended consequences and unanticipated societal reactions. As is often noted, the Congress has also come to play an administrative ombudsman role, organizing governmental oversight and mediating between citizens and "big government" (Mayhew, 1974; Fiorina, 1977; Huntington, 1984). These pressures have furthered Congress' quasi-clientelistic linkages to society and have also incorporated the bureaucracy into them (Arnold, 1979).

The Courts have continued to assume an extraordinary and (comparatively) unique policy making position. Courts at all levels have taken up a policy analysis stance -- eg,

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* Employment in the EOP crossed 300 with Eisenhower, 500 with Johnson, and 600 with Nixon, and has settled around 500-600.

the role of the Supreme Court as a review board for capital punishment (Shapiro, 1978). Increasingly the judgement style of the judiciary is that of working out the (supposed) logic of a policy position (Glazer, 1975), and searching for the social roots of a problem that has come to judicial attention. The post-war courts seem disposed, in many cases, to provide specific administrative mandates: in monitoring job hiring, or balancing the ethnic/racial mix of school districts, or establishing abortion trimesters, or, most recently, through providing fine-grained distinctions between lust and lasciviousness for obscenity cases. The oft-noted vagueness in legislative directives, and the ensuing politicization of administration, have undoubtedly pushed the judiciary in these directions; as have the detail-setting and non-market character of contemporary regulatory efforts.

The bureaucratic agencies have experienced growth, but without administrative consolidation. There has been some transfer of both legislative and judicial power to Federal agencies and to administrative law (consult Woll, 1977:Ch. 3). Much policy initiative comes from organized publics operating through bureaucratic channels (Bacheller, 1977). Policy specification is often accomplished in agencies rather than in Congress. "Public interest" concerns have been incorporated into administrative processes (Shefter, 1977:252), and some scholars in fact argue that the bureaucracy offers more representation than legislative processes (Woll, 1977:246). Survey responses show images of "bureaucracy" dominating politics, and increasing proportions of respondents hold that elected officials have "lost control" (Nachmias and Rosenbloom, 1980:243ff; Lipset and Schneider, 1983).

But an archetypical "strong state" possesses an "organizationally autonomous national administrative core" (Skocpol and Ikenberry, 1982). While there has been some increase in administrative tenure over time in the bureaucracy, and some tentative recent emergence of a high status cadre of administrative generalists, the U.S. state is not equipped with such a core. Bureaucrats have low tenures and job security, and are without clearly institutionalized elite career tracks (see esp. Heclo, 1977). Cabinet ministers are generally not civil servants, unlike the case in many other countries, a feature that can, when present, enhance bureaucratic power. There is no bureaucratic "establishment" in the U.S., and agency staffing is still characterized by amateurism and single-issue concentration (Brown, 1983). Bureaucrats typically share only highly general political orientations derived from education and meritocratic ideologies (ibid.). No autonomous administrative subculture has developed: note the exceptionalism of the U.S. in Aberbach, Putnam, and Rockman's comparative study, in which U.S. bureaucrats and politicians reveal similar, rather than distinct, political

outlooks (1981). In addition, in comparative perspective bureaucratic attitudes show striking closeness to those of the general populace (Beck, 1974; Meier, 1975). Interviews have suggested that civil servants do not think of themselves as members of a general civil servant cadre, but rather as specialists tied to particular agencies (Heclo, 1977).

These patterns are reflected in the fractious interest structure noted by many observers and discussed using the imagery of "bureaucratic politics." American bureaucracy is "pluralistic" (Woll, 1977:70-1). For example, the OMB has become a bureaucracy with its own "interests" (with some independent interests from the presidency as well), prone to intrude into the operation of other agencies. The U.S. in this regard shows particularly low rationalization of bureaucratic lines of authority. In this administrative context, societal interests readily penetrate the state, through (eg) the formation of "subgovernments" and "iron triangles" organized around policy sectors (Rose, 1980a; Heclo, 1978; Knoke and Laumann, 1985). This penetration is supported by comparatively high direct representation of social (esp. business) interests in government, reflected by the large number of businessmen and business-tied lawyers who not only lobby the state but man it as Congressmen, Cabinet officials, advisory commissions members, and agency staff (see the comparative comments by Badie and Birnbaum, 1983 and by Olson, 1983).

We've attended to the significant expansion of central government activity, prominence, and penetration of society. But note equally apparent features. The U.S. system shows strong buffering of some societal domains from central government intervention. (See eg the comparative reviews by policy areas in Heidenheimer, Heclo, and Adams, 1983.) This buffering seems tied to the particularly "privileged position" that those elites organizing civil society (esp. business elites) have in the U.S. (see eg Badie and Birnbaum, 1983). The profile of intervention and buffering defies simple classification: in certain respects, perhaps best characterized as "microeconomic," civil society experiences greater monitoring and regulation in the U.S. than elsewhere (think eg of economic externalities and consumer protection). But there is comparatively little "structural" intervention (cp. remarks by Katzenstein 1984:Ch. 1).

We discussed the expansion of resources and administrative capability at the center. But the absence of the "organizationally autonomous administrative core," also discussed above, limits policy consistency and predictability, and blocks the formation of a distinct administrative subculture with autonomous ideas and interests. Much policy debate is organized and formulated in fluid "issue networks" of policy experts and activists,

networks only loosely coupled to formal governmental organization (Heclo, 1978; Laumann, 1984). Much of central government's expanded activity is produced through use of "intermediary organizations" rather than central administrative means (ibid.): eg through the states, cities, or contractors. Many analysts have remarked upon the limited set of policy instruments available to the U.S. central state. Lowi notes the reliance on financing, licensing, and underwriting risk as policy mechanisms, as well as the creation of commissions and agencies to organize and bargain with private interests (Lowi, 1979). Initial New Deal policies had a decidedly more corporatist cast, contemplating peak bargaining and state reorganization of society into a confederation of collectivities (Friedman, 1984). But the retreat from this model was rapid, and an emphasis on establishing individual welfare "rights" and participation became the dominant thrust of the U.S. welfare state (ibid., see also Skocpol, 1980).

Within the diverse and fractious central government interest structure, one finds a wide dispersion of veto-power: still "fused functions and divided powers." This feature produces much stasis, reversals, implementation failures, etc. (think eg of "energy policy"). The U.S. has experienced a fragmented centralization of power (Meyer and Scott, 1983): there are multiple centers at the system's expanded core, maintaining the "myriad points of access" but changing their location. The courts, for example, have become a quite independent policy center (Glazer, 1975). Extraordinary power is located at certain nodes within this network (even from a comparative view): eg in interstitial institutions such as the Federal Reserve and the courts.

But for many policy areas or activities, there are no or shifting loci of power. The limited coordination means available often produces policy by default: eg, the current budget deficit and the (apparently) unintended Keynesianism of the Reagan administration. Current commentators have trouble deciding whether the U.S. has no economic policy at all (eg The Economist, June 29, 1985:21-22), or an extraordinarily concerted and aggressive one (Le Monde Diplomatique, August 1984:20-21, attributing a political regulation of the business cycle to the Reagan administration that is "the greatest example of state voluntarism in the post-war epoch"). In cases where strong disparate interests are voiced, the governmental system has weak integrative capacities, and depends primarily on the charisma of the presidency; yet only in the U.S. can the president so readily and successfully continue to disclaim responsibility for central government's actions and inactions.

Thus pronounced "centralization" can occur without producing an integrated center or enhanced policy capability. Increasing "stateness" can develop without the

emergence of a coherent institutionalized public that aggregates interests and guides policy through the establishment of collective purposes. The pattern of centralization that has emerged can nevertheless have quite significant effects on citizen activity and orientations.

3.2 Beyond the State: Changes in the U.S. Polity

We've been discussing the U.S. central government and governmental system, and have noted some evidence of an "expanded," and in certain respects more centralized, governmental system. Equally prominent, however, is the continuing fragmentation of central government; fragmented centralization helps to account for the U.S. system's ongoing distinctiveness. But formal government is only part of the broader "polity": the organization of collective "jurisdiction and governance" in a collectivity (Swanson, 1971). There has been significant expansion and change in U.S. national political structure outside of changes in governmental activity and organization. Political changes can become institutionalized in society, rather than in the state, and much national-scale political activity can -- and does -- remain largely independent of direct administrative coordination and control.*

Perhaps some historical examples can best illustrate this point. A prominent characteristic of the American polity has been the presence of national goals and national public policy-making neither formulated, directed nor implemented by a national "state." Many types of clearly public activities have been organized without (or with minimal use of) formal governmental mechanisms. The American schooling system, for example, had social movement origins, and attained great national homogeneity and institutionalization in organizational forms and curriculum without central governmental imperatives and coordination (see eg Meyer, Tyack, Nagel, and Gordon, 1979). Other areas of American collective life have shown high rates of organizational formation for achievement of public tasks, without much governmental coordination. The U.S. polity was a "common enterprise" before a nation (Grodzins, 1966), and a nation before a "state." For much time, it was a polity of "mobilized localities," with hybrid institutions mixing both public and private actors (ibid.).

This polity's "strength" was located in the high homogeneity and articulation of political subsystems -- unlike systems characterized by conflicting political mechanisms and jurisdictions. (Grodzins famous "marble

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* We draw in this paragraph and those that follow on a number of papers by John Meyer and colleagues. See this paper's reference section.

cake" simile is somewhat deceptive in focussing attention to the marbling and less to the coherence of the cake.) A highly integrative legal system, with laissez-faire and universalistic orientations, helped to promote such articulation, as did the relative absence of particularistic barriers such as aristocratic tradition or caste, and the low level of external constraint on the state. Moreover, in the U.S. polity, the interpenetration of religious and political activity invested collective action with a moral charter (see Bellah and Hammond, 1980).

There are important contemporary examples of such national public action organized with only loose coupling to central government. Much change in U.S. education systems, for example, continues to be driven by societal rather than governmental political forces. The contemporary debate over "the crisis in the classroom," and the policy responses to such debate, is motivated at the national level by an "issue network" (Heclo, 1978) of education professionals and activists operating as agents of political society -- acting unofficially, in governmental terms, but nevertheless with some rather clear public standing and mandate -- with any ensuing institutional changes to be worked out and implemented by individual states or communities (Meyer, Scott, Strang, and Creighton, 1985; Swidler, 1982).

In speaking of the "polity," we refer in part (adapting a definition from Tilly) to the collective action of members of government, those members of society who have routine and low-cost access to government channels and resources, and those social members who contend for such access (cp. Tilly, 1979:52; see also Thomas and Meyer, 1983). The polity denotes means of organizing as a collective body to form and exert a collective will. (While a market system clearly achieves much social coordination, its outcomes are aggregative products, produced without "collective action" as typically conceived.) A polity can be characterized by its distribution of social sovereignty: the distribution of rights and responsibilities to act for the collectivity (Coleman, 1974; 1982). One can refer to the types of actors within the polity (eg, individuals, or communities, or firms in certain contexts); and to types of "agents" of the polity -- actors who speak as legitimate representatives or embodiments of the collectivity, or who take collective action on its behalf.

We also refer to the "polity" to denote social activities or outcomes conceived to be collective, public -- eg, instances in which outcomes from exchanges between actors acting in "private" capacities are not accepted as necessarily or properly binding on the collectivity.

With this general discussion of the polity as background, we'd like to call attention to four arguable

changes in the post-war polity (a - d below), above and beyond the changes in the formal governmental system.

a. Increased publicness.

In this period, increasing domains of social activity have come formally under legal regulation or public jurisdiction; and increasing types of social outcomes are seen as requiring reasons, justifications. Simultaneously, there has been an extraordinary increase in citizenship rights and in citizenship and rights claims -- a current example being the emergence of claims that conflict directly with traditional market principles (eg, "equal compensation"). This rights-expansion process now appears to be institutionalized trans-nationally in the world polity (see eg Boli-Bennett, 1979; Meyer, 1980). Tied to rights claims, one finds some increase of perceived externalities of private decisions and actions, allied with increasing expectations regarding public responsibility for counteracting or compensating for such externalities (including, for example, calls for "social responsibility" of corporations [Stone, 1975]). The lowering entry-cost to politics (Wilson, 1979) that many perceive comes about in part because more matters are categorized as public and national ones. Society itself is increasingly perceived as if it were a corporate actor. Efforts at, and -- especially -- rhetorics of "planning" become more prominent (see Glock, 1976).

b. Social corporateness.

By corporateness we refer to the character and types of actors and "interests" in society. In this regard, the post-war period is characterized by the emergence of a society of collectively-organized interests, amounting to a radical change in the corporateness of the polity and social environment. In the first instance, the national collectivity has become a "society of organizations." Charles Perrow comments that "we no longer have a society in which formal organizations are simply one of many parts, coexisting with families, groups, neighborhoods, communities... Instead, organizations, whether public or private, economic or noneconomic, either profoundly affect these other units or absorb them. There is little that matters that goes on in society outside of organizations or processes which are strongly mediated by organizations" (Perrow, 1978). But one should complicate this picture by noting that in such a society many "interests" are constructed and organized by sets of often autonomous organizations with little formal coordination, and that certain interests become projected and represented with little formal participation in (or even knowledge of) such representation by the population segments presumably

involved (the consumer movement and the elderly are arguable examples). (See Brody, 1978; also Scott, 198#).

The occupational and corporate-group structure of the economy has itself become more political. With expanded legal and regulatory coordination of this organization-dominated context, interest aggregation and mobilization occurs in increasingly "planned environments" (Meyer and Scott, 1983). The numerical expansion and heightened economic centrality of the professions and service-sector salariat may have been stimulated by market forces, but the form and dynamics of professionalization have been driven by politico-institutional ones: political licensing; delegation of control over supply, credentialling, quality control -- creating substantial insulation of certain economic and occupational sectors from market processes (Randall Collins' "sinecure society" [1979]). This development amounts to the establishment of a state-dependent status structure in civil society, another important change in the character of "corporateness" of the polity.

c. Political Identifications and Foci.

The emergence and institutionalization of the so-called mass media has occasioned a profound nationalization of communication networks and social imagery. This emergence has itself constituted a major institutional change in the polity (for one analysis that treats media as a political institution in this sense, see Huntington, 1981). These media have stimulated rising prominence of national government in citizen images of their social environment, independent of actual changes in government. And depth interviews have suggested that citizens have come to believe that one of the major ways in which "things are made to happen" in the polity is through gaining and holding media attention (Lubell, 1970).

The cognitive nationalization promoted by the mass media induces a fusion of personal and collective perceptions. Every day, the various media focus citizen attention on various proferred indicators of the condition and direction of the nation as a collective organization (eg, inflation, unemployment, crime rates). Citizens sample from such depictions of collective reality for interpreting their own personal condition and projecting future prospects. For a wide variety of topics, individuals appear to consult collective depictions of national experience or performance as much or more than their own personal experience in establishing assessments of their own present fortunes or future prospects, or in forming opinions about social affairs. Regarding policy opinions, and voting choices, for example (in the words of one review), "the economic predicaments of private life have only weak and

intermittent effects on which policies citizens endorse"; group and national identifications may be more salient (Kinder, 1983:403 and passim; Kinder, Rosenstone, and Hansen, 1983).

The equally dramatic post-war expansion of higher education, prompted initially by the massive state investment represented by the GI Bill, has also contributed to this cognitive "socio-centrism" (Kinder and Kiewiet's term, 1981; see also Lipset, 1985), and has had two other main polity effects (see Meyer, 1977). First, broader segments of the citizenry have been familiarized with rationalistic, science-tied accounts of social causation, problems, and solutions. The U.S. arguably was the first "scientized polity" (Habermas, 1970). Second, educational expansion has produced cadres of "activist professionals" (McCarthy and Zald, 1973) and a "theory of personnel" (Meyer, 1970) to support them. This societal account provides unofficial charters for such professionals to operate as embodied solutions looking for problems, as well as meritocratic justifications of authority, discourses of expertise, and rhetorics of "planning" that are independent of actual planning efforts or capabilities.

These changes represent significant shifts in the constraining ideological environment for politics.

d. Centralization of expanded national public authority.

The American polity itself has become more "statist" in part because popular perceptions of political causation and responsibility have become more focussed on central government and because individuals perceive increasing impingement of political affairs on private lives (for indirect evidence, see Lubell, 1970; Lipset and Schneider, 1983; Litwak, Hooyman, and Warren, 1973; Brody and Sniderman, 1977; Converse et al., 1980; Nachmias and Rosenbloom, 1980:240ff). The sovereignty of the central state has risen relative to that of other collective bodies, as evidenced both by the expanded social penetration discussed above and by increased central delegation of public functions to private organizations and actors. Examples include government contracts with MacDonald's to provide public lunch programs; or the "privatization of welfare" through subsidization of for-profit hospitals or services for the elderly (Dimaggio, 1983). Such programs reveal reduced differentiation between public and private sectors, with private bodies becoming more public in funding and purpose.

The law is particularly revealing of shifts in social sovereignty. Federal law in the U.S. for much time had an interstitial character -- designed as background to the

corpus of states' law (Hart and Weschler, 1953). But this picture has not been accurate for some time. Federal law has expanded greatly and has assumed a leading and integrative role. More and more portions of Federal law take the form of instructions to administrators rather than citizens (Lowi, 1979:106). There are instructive shifts in the "private" law of torts and contracts as well (Feeley, 1984). Accident law in the state courts has reflected restructuring attempts directed toward ensuring that such law embodies an appropriate public policy. Contract law reveals efforts to develop an organized and effective public system of compensation. Such changes, in the words of one observer, represent an "institutionalized activism," "an aspect of a growing, although often implicit and unarticulated social ethic..." (Feeley, 1984:30-31; see also Orren, 1976). In the language of this paper, these legal trends (and this "ethic") represent shifts in the institutionalized patterns of the polity: greater publicness and corporateness of society; refocussing of political imagery; and the centralization of sovereignty.

4. The Connections of Citizen Repertoires to Political Institutions: An Explanatory Sketch

Previous sections have sketched secular changes in electoral participation and attitudes, and called attention to shifts in the institutional structure of the U.S. polity. We now need to develop our account of the linkages between institutional patterns and participation trends. We first turn to a brief, general consideration of citizen repertoires of political action -- learned sets of political activities that individuals are aware of, have some understanding of, and feel (at least in principle) that they are capable of undertaking. These repertoires vary greatly over time and seem closely tied to specific institutional circumstances (see Tilly, 1979, 1984; also Olson, 1983:30 and passim.). We then return to the electoral and attitudinal matters presented in section 2, exploring how institutional shifts might be implicated in these trends and simultaneously involved in stimulating collective forms of political participation focussed on national-level mobilization sites.

We need to make clear, in advance, that we do not believe and do not argue that there has been a complete transformation of the political culture. In fact, in our view, many of the processes we discuss expand the "civic culture" by building up more rights for many status occupants (eg the terminally ill and dying) and by

constructing new rights for others (eg the newly promoted right of children to live in physical security). Hence an emergent claimant culture is a source for the expansion of the civic culture; at the same time, however, the coexistence of these two cultural patterns is a source of political tension and conflict.

We will stress throughout the effects of change in political institutions on political repertoires. Clearly some reciprocality obtains here: changes in political institutions can in part be due to (eg) "bottom up" pressure from civil society. "State-making" itself can be usefully conceived as a product of a kind of social movement politics (see eg Grew, 1984).

But institutional change can be the result of quite different causal processes, quite obviously independent of mass shifts in citizen repertoires and orientations: eg, changes in demands from small segments of the citizenry with privileged voice in the polity; endogenous bureaucratic expansion independent of changes in civil society ("policy as its own cause"); or external military or economic pressure inducing response by state or societal elites. (There is evidence to suggest, in fact, that domestic social changes in themselves are less potent sources of political institutional change than exogenous factors. See Krasner, 1984, for this general proposition, and Skowronek, 1982, for argument from the U.S. case).

The general character of the causal sketch of this paper then is: (1) changes in political institutions, however achieved, seem to be consistently implicated in shifts in citizen repertoires and orientations; (2) while changes in orientations can lead to changes in institutions, this causal linkage seems to be less stable and pronounced; and (3) prominent shifts in American repertoires and orientations seem to have followed institutional changes in the state and polity. We will explore these causal matters further, and qualify this general picture, in the sections that follow.

4.1 Repertoires and Institutions

Charles Tilly writes that

> hijacking, mutiny, machine breaking, charivaris, village fights, tax rebellions, food riots, collective self-immolation, lynching, vendetta have all belonged to the standard collective-action repertoire of some group at some time. In one setting or another, people have known routinely how to initiate every one of them. People have at some time recognized every one of them as a legitimate, feasible way of acting on an

> unsatisfied grievance or aspiration. Most of these forms of action are technically feasible in contemporary America. Yet they occur rarely, or not at all. More important, no substantial American group with a pressing grievance or aspiration considers any of them to be a genuine alternative to demonstrating, striking, petitioning, or forming a pressure group. They do not belong to the contemporary American repertoire of collective action (Tilly, 1979:153).

Tilly has studied the 19th century shift to deliberate construction of new groups for the "offensive pursuit of new rights and advantages." National social movements emerge for the first time. Tilly associates this emergence with the expanded national centers associated with 19th century state-making; the increasing organization of both capital and labor associated with industrialization and economic concentration; and the allied reduction of the political salience of communities (Tilly, 1984).

The association of repertoire forms with the resources, cues and activity sites of political environments has become an important proposition in comparative political sociology (see eg Schattschneider, 1960; Rokkan, 197#; Olson, 1983; March and Olson, 1984). For example, oppositional movements with antisystem and "takeover" orientations are most often found in political environments having strong central governments (Badie and Birnbaum, 1983:77; Birnbaum, 1982). For weaker state forms, one generally finds more populist or corporatist forms of opposition. "It is hard to rebel against a weak state" (Katznelson and Prewitt, 1979); "to seize the power of the state makes sense only if the state is assumed to have power" (Rose, 1980b:168). Decentralized political structures stimulate higher birth rates for political organizations, because they provide greater access to decision-centers and lower costs of entry (Wilson, 1973). And the ways in which party organizations map onto socio-political cleavages are highly consequential for the forms, degrees, and distributions of citizen activity (Verba, Nie, and Kim, 1978). Strong national party systems, for example, heighten conventional participation of less advantaged population segments, but also constrain the development of social movement politics.*

4.2 An Argument: The institutional sources of change in U.S. political repertoires

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* There are indications that the types of political socialization mediating these institutional effects start early: note eg the provocative cross-national studies of children's images of political authority conducted by Greenstein and Tarrow (1971).

In section 2 we reviewed lines of argument about shifts in participation and attitudes, without offering conclusions or alterative lines. We try to do so now.

Section 2 left us with the following set of trends:

(i) Some aggregate decline in voting participation in national-level elections.

(ii) Evidence of electoral drop-out of the least educated and least advantaged segments of the populace, such that the voting electorate has become increasingly class segmented and concentrated.

(iii) Evidence of "apartisan de-alignment" (Ginsberg, 1984): reduced attachments to the two dominant parties and attenuated connections of party identifications to voting.

(iv) A widening "confidence gap" revealed in measures of trust and confidence in government.

(v) Little apparent change in political interest or in impressions of citizen duty to vote.

Section 5 of this paper, below, will sketch a sixth trend:
(vi) Greatly expanded prominence of collectivist participation: through social movement and protest forms; single issue specialization; collectivity-based court litigation; and administratively-located lobbying and negotiation.

We think these changes present an inter-related pattern, one that is closely related to the institutional reconfiguration discussed in section 3. While we do not have a well-formulated model of such putative connections, we do wish to suggest a few simple arguments that could provide initial materials for such a theoretical account. The general form of our argument is a simple one, and relies primarily on two causal processes. First, we suggest that repertoires adapt to new environmental niches, characterized by new resources and new constraints. New forms of participation emerge because they are efficacious in a reconfigured environment. But we do not imagine that the patterns of causation behind shifts in participation are limited to the "pull" forces of environmental selection. For we believe, secondly, that important "push" forces are involved, stemming from changes in the organization (eg, of its corporateness and communication networks) and the content (eg, the expansionary logic of rights claims) of the polity. Thus changes in repertoires occur much more rapidly than would be the case if only adaptation processes were present. For example, the sudden emergence and consolidation of the consumer movement defies any purely organizational or adaptation-based argument.

We single out three major ways in which changes in political institutions can affect repertoires and orientations. First, institutional shifts politicize social processes and outcomes in new ways, and change citizen images of the social environment. Second, they produce new "mobilizational sites" (Dahl, 1966) and loci of resources; third, such changes establish new competitive and normative pressures upon political mobilization (see Dimaggio and Powell, 1983). These three themes will figure prominently in the explanation sketch that follows.

Figure 1 below provides a simple representation of our working causal imagery.*

<FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE>

Overt and prominent central government intervention and regulation has a politicizing effect, in part because government interventions are typically selective, favoring one segment or group over another (Habermas, 1975; Offe, 1984). Intervention also directs mobilization efforts toward the center. The U.S. system's use of policy intermediaries "politicizes organizational life" (Heclo, 1978), infusing wide ranges of organizations with public policy charges. With the emergence of "planned environments," organizations begin to monitor political as well as economic events more closely. (In-house legal departments of major corporations, for example, spend more time scanning, projecting, and analyzing regulatory and legislative activity [Chayes and Chayes, 1984]).

In addition, the expanded state produces new niches for political activity, and new loci of resources -- affecting the opportunity structure of politics, and stimulating new forms of mobilization and new interest alignments (see eg the papers in Berger, 1981). "Fragmented centralization," for example, produces new opportunities for mobilized groups to compete <u>within</u> the state for political attention and resources, thus changing the domain of political activity -- affording new opportunities for group political incorporation within the state to secure both status and

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* We caution that this figure simply represents a rough interpretive aid, and can not stand, and is not intended to to stand, as a causal model. Some readers find such pictorial representation useful; for those who do not, we encourage agnosticism and redirect attention to discussion in the body of the text.

material resources. (Note for example the rise of Washington-based interest groups [Walker, 1983; Schlozman and Tierney, 1983, 1984]). The scale of mobilization necessary to compete for attention, collective legitimacy, or incorporation has risen substantially. Expanded states quite generally shift advantages to groups who can operate on a large scale to demand a hearing, disrupt routines, or control governmental officials (see Tilly, 1984). We think that many arguments about political participation miss these changes in the sites and scale of political action: the shift from mass mobilization at local levels to social movement mobilization and bureaucratic organization at the centers. In this sense, politics has been "nationalized."

Changes in the modes and networks of communications in the polity have induced a "competition for visibility" on a national scale (Lubell, 1970). Independent of direct competition, institutional changes have induced mimetic mobilization, as newly forming groups copy organizational forms or repertoires perceived to be efficacious ones (example: the diffusion of the tactics of civil disobedience). Central government has itself directly encouraged mobilization in attempts to "mobilize consent," and thus has established normative inducements for interest group formation -- for example, the war on poverty and the "grass roots" mobilization it spawned. It has also directly subsidized such mobilization, as with provision for financial support of participatory access provided in some legislation (see Taub, et al, 1977; Hansen, 1985).

Under these changed conditions, the individualistic, localistic, and voting-centered politics of the civic culture become less compelling. More and more citizens perceive central government as both the source and a potential solution for personal and collective problems. As members of civil society and possessors of particularistic "interests," individuals and groups begin to seek out and establish clientelistic ties to the center; while simultaneously distrusting and criticizing them in their capacities as citizens of the polity. The dominant political parties become less useful in such efforts, as well as less central vehicles for control over local politics or for representation of class or ethnic interests (Kleppner, 1982; Ladd, 1978). This trend in party salience accelerates mass demobilization.

In addition, with state expansion, centralization, and realignment at the center, policy outputs and performance have become less and less tied to electoral outcomes and party incumbency. This feature of the system has been learned and is now expected by the citizenry, if not necessarily accepted. So has the (impression of) loss of direct voice as a general citizen -- though, N.B., not necessarily as a representative of a particular interest segment. In a society of collectivities and organizations,

"natural persons" have become less efficacious, less powerful -- as individual citizens -- and know it (see eg Coleman, 1974; 1982). Such impressions reduce the motive for the universalistic participation, and lessen support for the "general will" orientations, of the archetypical civic culture (see Zipp, 1985).

In such a context, the decision to vote is primarily driven by impressions of citizen duty and collective identity: more a form of symbolic politics, an "act of political ritualism," than instrumentally driven (see Shienbaum, 1984, for important discussion and evidence; Nachmias and Rosenbloom 1980:251 also argue that with "bureaucratization," electoral participation loses value as an instrumental activity). Shienbaum asserts that voters recognize institutional changes making rational prospective or retrospective voting difficult or impossible to accomplish; in response, they redirect their "rational action" elsewhere. Citizen contacting, for example, seems highly instrumental (Shienbaum, 1984, citing Verba and Nie, 1972). Temporal variation in political participation may be quite generally sensitive to economic and political context, with financial insecurity depressing participation and political novelty or competitiveness heightening it, but this general responsiveness doesn't reveal evidence of much instrumentality in voting: Hansen and Rosenstone conclude, for example, that "higher stakes" affect turnout very little (1984:35). The practice of voting, as largely an expression of general solidarity, may be a rational act for members of the polity who feel they benefit from the current "bias" (Schattschneider) of the system; and non-voting a similarly rational consideration for those who do not feel incorporated (Shienbaum, 1984; Zipp, 1985). Those who have pioneered the new collective politics are also those who participate most regularly in the conventional forms (see eg Burnham, 1978).

As the gap in political efficacy of organized groups and individual citizens widens, the response of individuals with little collective representation in fact has been to drop out of politics in unprecedented numbers. Such segments include blue-collar workers (esp. non-union), the young, the poor, the less educated and more economically and culturally marginal populations generally (Burnham, 1978; Ladd, 1978; Kleppner, 1982; Kleppner and Baker, 1980; Cavanagh, 1981). In part, such abstention follows from the understandably lesser propensity of such groups to engage in symbolic solidarity. Additionally, of course, financial hardship is a powerful depressor of participation (Rosenstone, 1982; Hansen and Rosenstone, 1984). The exception proves the rule: blacks have historically increased their voting participation, after coming to perceive some instrumental value of collective action and their collective vote. This experience provides an example of the potentially counter-active effects of strenuous

collective mobilization; but successful mobilization of such groups is achieved only with the greatest effort and cost.

The striking rise in individual experience within educational institutions in the post-war period is, we think, a prime mover behind a wide range of attitudinal shifts: sustaining impressions of citizen duty and political interest; equipping individuals with the capacity and propensity for greater skepticism and criticism of government (and thus for less trust); and disseminating enhanced impressions of, and models for, collective action. Educational expansion, as a collective phenomenon, serves to realign political orientations, rather than providing straightforward support or stimulation for the activities and attitudes of the civic culture.

Obviously the participation and orientations of the civic culture are not crowded out alltogether. Rather, they are supplemented by new collective action forms, and no longer monopolize political repertoires. The centralization of resources, together with a lack of a strong corporatist hold on the system's center, enables multiple collective agents to penetrate the center for functional representation. In turn, more collectivities are motivated to organize by the success of others. The legalism of the polity, the increasing publicness of social matters, and the opportunities (and open-ended logic) of rights claims nourishes such mobilization. As in most competitive environments, learning by doing obtains: eg, women learn that they may be more effective in contributing money to NOW than by voting or (even) running for office (Freeman, 1975). The legitimation of central government as a proper location for debate and solutions, and the multiple arenas available in the polity for contacting or addressing the center -- again, only for those who can achieve sufficient collective voice -- prompts the formation of broadened political repertoires; diversified investments of political time, numbers, and money; and multiple objectives for targeting collective action. We document some of these shifts in the following section.

5. Expanding Participation Forms and Repertoire Shifts: The Collective Action Politics of a Claimant Culture

We now describe the forms of collective action that have emerged to play an expanded role in response to changed political conditions. Our purpose is twofold: to describe briefly the forms and to link them to dimensions of the political system that we have already identified.*

We describe four forms of collective participation that have become increasingly prevalent and important in securing functional representation in the political system. These are: (1) social movement politics; (2) issue organizations; (3) court litigation by collective actors; and (4) political lobbying with congress, legislatures and administrative agencies.

4.1 Social Movement Politics

Social movement politics are by no means new phenomena in American political life. American history has been characterized by waves of social movements. As Lipset (1983; 1963) points out, social movement politics are typical features of societies with weak central states, with groups attempting to legitimate their specific interests by claiming that they represent the collective good (Beer, 1971). In societies with stronger national states, like Britain, such legitimating claims are simply not available to interest groups, and hence the latter tend to make much narrower economic claims. In such societies, the state is the only institution clearly recognized as representing the national interest.

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* The point, ultimately, is to facilitate general comparative analysis and comparative analysis of the American political system. Nation-states obviously have different institutional structures, so that some of the American changes in political action will not be relevant to them. For example, in civil law countries the courts play a lesser role in affecting legal and social change than in common-law countries (see Merryman, 1969). As a result, litigation is less likely to be as prominent a strategy of protest groups in Europe than in the U.S., even though on many other dimensions European state structures are similar and have changed in the same direction.

One of the political developments of the 1950s and '60s was the use of social movements and protest politics by an expanding number of groups (see Skolnick, 1968). In this period, groups whose major resources were size of membership and the willingness to protest discovered that such a propensity could be quite efficacious (Lipsky, 1968). Blacks pioneered this form in the 1950s and it was quickly taken up by others in the '60s -- students, minorities, women, gays etc.

We do not claim that protest politics were more prevalent during this period than others in American history (see Gamson, 1975, on this point). (We note in passing, however, that the 1980 follow-up of the 1973-75 "Political Action" survey of protest propensities showed greater experience with and propensity for protest activity in the U.S. by the second time period [Kaase, 1984].) Nor do we argue that the rate of individual participation in organizations was higher during this period. McCarthy and Zald (1973) argue persuasively that individual participation rates remained steady between the 1950s and the 1970s.

What did occur during this period -- in both the U.S. and Europe -- was the creation of <u>more</u> social movements and greater movement targeting of central state agencies and policies. Both the research in Western Europe (see Barnes and Kaase, 1978; Inglehart, 1977; Dalton, 1984) and the U.S. (McCarthy and Zald, 1973) credit the expanded educational systems -- especially university expansion -- with facilitating the development of protest politics as a contemporary form of political action. These educational systems produced large populations of young adults who had the time, energy and political and organizational skills to man successfully large-scale political movements. Furthermore, their educational status defined them as important and valuable sources of "human capital" in an era of intensified nation-state competition. As a result, they became important national and local elites. Black college students, for example, served as an important source of leadership within the American black community (see Skolnick, 1969). The consequence during the '60s was that among young, highly educated populations political protest and policy dissatisfaction became more closely correlated than in the past (Barnes and Kaase, 1978:438, 523-537). While protest politics were more widespread in the U.S., the comparative research suggests that they had become standard political forms for young adults in both the U.S. and Western Europe.

Recent research suggests that protest politics has now become a <u>conventional</u> form of political action for those groups whose major resource is numerical size. Thus, Schlozman and Tierney (1983; 1984) found that among Washington-based interest groups, picketing, mass protests

and other forms of protest politics were practiced mainly by organized labor and public interest groups. Such forms may provide rational political tactics for groups that are presently unincorporated in the state (see Ramirez, 1981). This generalization certainly seems to apply to the groups who used protest politics in the U.S. during the 1950s and '60s -- blacks, the young, women.

Diffusion of this form also appears to have occurred in Western Europe. In the 1970s up to one third of the German adult population indicated in polls that they were contemplating becoming members of some citizen initiative group (Conradt, 1980:249). Given that such single issue groups were qualitatively new forms of political action in the 1960s, the willingness of large numbers of Germans to consider such political action demonstrates the remarkable diffusion of this non-electoral form of politics.

Protest politics also seem to have become increasingly <u>institutionalized</u> in the U.S. and Europe. Much of the uncertainty that characterized the behavior of demonstrators and police in the 1960s has disappeared. Police have learned to use restraint and to be less fearful of these events. Organizers have learned how to deliver an orderly and often cheerful crowd of demonstrators who commit little property damage and personal violence. Police are often notified by demonstration organizers ahead of time concerning what activities will take place and who will initiate them (see, for example, Strang's, 1981, discussion of the Boston Clamshell Alliance).

Protest politics has become a more reputable form of political participation. Much of the fear created by protest movements in the '60s has subsided. In the May 1968 crisis in France, for example, large segments of the French electorate viewed the protests by students and workers as dangerous to civil order (Inglehart, 1977: 277ff). These perceptions are much less likely today -- in France, Europe or the U.S. The institutionalization of the rules and forms of protest has aided this process, minimizing the potential for violence and disorder.

State expansion itself may have stimulated such forms of political action. Bergesen (1980) makes such a point in his discussion of the "police riots" that occurred during the 1960s' black ghetto revolts. The police, he argues, represented ethnic groups who saw themselves losing local control and status as a result of the alliance between blacks and federal government agencies involved in the war on poverty.

This kind of argument seems particularly useful in describing much of the protest politics of the '70s and many of the single issue movements. Many groups, such as the new Christian right (see Hilland Owen, 1982), disagree with the

policies and the rights that an expanding national state has created: e.g. the right to an abortion; or the stricter separation of church and state.

Furthermore, expanding states create new issues when they intervene in areas that were previously governed by private interests (as we've discussed above). With the extension of public authority, what groups will have public, legal status in the new domains? (See Offe, 1982.) Much contention of the '70s and '80s in the U.S. and Europe has revolved around this matter of empowerment (particularly apparent for environmental issues).

Two comparative observations concerning social movements are in order before we move on to deal directly with issue politics. First, it appears that social movements penetrate political parties more easily in the U.S. than in Europe. Many of the activists from the student and women's movements, for example, have been assimilated into leadership roles within the Democratic party (see Ladd's, 1978, discussion). Similarly, many conservative activists have found a home in the Republican party. In Europe, this interpenetration has not occurred. Institutional rules and competitive pressures direct movement activists in multi-party systems toward formation of new minority parties.

In addition, the corporatist and centralized character of many Western European states raises the entry costs and the price of legitimation for movements, since any movement that wants to achieve voice must organize at the national level. This feature restricts the opportunities to participate, and gives only the largest and most resourceful movements a chance of success. As many have observed, state centralization thus reduces the incentive to form movements and decreases the actual number that are formed (Wilson, 1973, ch. 5). Secondly, the higher centralization of state organization also makes existing political elites more cohesive and more resistant to penetration by outsiders (see Olson, 1982 on Sweden). Assimilation becomes a less attractive avenue of political action -- especially for movement leaders, for whom assimilation appears as cooptation. Forming a new minority party, or staying entirely out of formal politics, may therefore be the most attractive choices. This choice certainly seems to have been the one confronted by the Greens (the environmental movement) in Germany.

4.2 Issue Mobilization and Specialization

The second major repertoire shift during the period 1950-1980 has been the expansion of single-issue specialization and organization, centered around, for example, nuclear energy or abortion (see Nie et al. 1979;

Miller 1981; also Shienbaum, 1984; Dalton, 1984). With the decline of partisanship, starting during the 1960s, and the expansion of education, the electorate became more fragmented and more heavily organized around particular issues and policy domains than in the past.

In the U.S. the expansion of issue politics has undermined much of the localism of political discourse. It has nationalized local politics through the infusion of issues generated outside the community and through the penetration of local politics by money and resources brought in from the outside by contending groups. A good illustration of this process is Congressman Jim Leach's description of Iowa politics (see Drew, 1983:4):

> We're mainly rural and small business, but in elections the Republicans are largely funded by business, much of which doesn't have anything to do with the state, and the Democrats are funded by labor, much of which doesn't have anything to do with the state. And you see a breakdown in citizen access. Not that the constituent isn't going to get in the door, but the guy who gave the money is going to get in first. So what you really see is a breakdown in constitutional democracy, which is supposed to be based on citizen access and constituency access. We're seeing regional politics and state and citizen politics become national. National groups determine outcomes, whereas local constituencies used to provide the crucial role. This is new.

One indication of the nationalization of local politics is the importance that presidential popularity and perceived policy success has assumed in determining the outcomes of local congressional races (Abramovitz, 1984; Kinder and Kiewiet, 1979; see also Jacobson and Kernell, 1983). Clearly national issues are increasingly important components of local elections. Politicians react to national trends in endorsing and otherwise supporting candidates, and voters appear to respond to candidates in terms of the perceived success of their party leadership in dealing with important national issues like the economy (Fiorina, 1981; Kinder and Kiewiet, 1979; 1981). In addition, citizens increasingly seek to use local institutions as platforms from which to address the national polity -- an important and insufficiently appreciated trend. Localities take stances on nuclear disarmament, for example, or declare themselves opposed to South African investment, or configure themselves as sanctuaries for refugees.

Washington, D.C.-based issue organizations have proliferated. As the state penetrates more of society and becomes more important in national life, physical proximity to the center of state organization has become important for

groups trying to achieve political influence. Using a retrospective sampling design, Walker (1983) shows that there has been a steady growth of Washington-based groups since the 1920s. The newest type of group -- public interest lobbies -- started their growth somewhat later (in the 1940s) but have grown markedly since then.

While Walker's (1983) sample is contaminated by an unknown amount of selection bias (those organizations not surviving in 1980, the time of the sampling, were not counted) other evidence also indicates that the period between 1960 and 1980 saw a marked growth in issue and interest organizations. Over 60% of the Washington-based interest groups surveyed by Schlozman and Tierney (1983; 1984) in 1978, for example, had been formed after 1960.* Political action committees started their rise in 1972. By the mid '70s, about one quarter of the largest corporations had a PAC (Epstein, 1979). This number has risen to over 50% as of 1980 among the Fortune 500 corporations (Andreas, 1985). Many of these are Washington-based or located in state capitals (see also Drew, 1983). The southern religious right also emerged as a prominent force during this period and with it single issue organizations based on moral issues (Hill and Owen, 1982; see also Wuthnow, 1983). Ethnic groups also mobilized during this period, often pushing specific programs (Nagel and Olzak, 1982). Women formed a variety of issue organizations, as did other groups who felt discriminated against and excluded from the political process (see Freeman, 1975; 1979). In addition, the public interest lobbies grew sharply during this period.

Issue differentiation and mobilization has changed the nature of politics. Increasingly political action is dominated by collectivities. This change has intensified the "scramble for benefits and entitlements," as Beer (1982) has remarked. The recent discussions of political organizations and interest groups reflect this change with their focus on subsidization (Hansen, 1985).

Many of the new issues are moral ones, which cannot be easily resolved through the normal processes of log-rolling and compromise politics. Hence, Brown (1983) describes the new era as one of "principled politics." Furthermore, the sheer number of interest groups involved in any issue domain creates problems. It is more difficult to achieve and sustain policy consensus, as previous sections have discussed.

Unlike social movements, whose persistence is always

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* In another study of interest groups, about half of the groups surveyed in 1973 had been formed between 1968 and 1973 (Berry, 197#).

precarious, interest and issue groups appear likely to be an enduring feature of public life. Discontent -- and reform -- have become bureaucratized and professionalized. Issue movement organizations are becoming more professional in structure and staffing and are capable of a wide variety of sustained political activities as a consequence (see McCarthy and Zald, 1973; Wood and Knoke, 1983). First, they are more likely to be able to raise funds from external sources, apart from member contributions. Wood and Knoke (1983) found that those voluntary associations in Indianapolis that had more professional staff in 1968 had larger budgets and extracted more resources from external agencies. Second, apart from enhancing their political legitimacy -- a central political resource in itself -- the presence of a specialized staff expands the range of political activities and tactics these groups can sustain. Schlozman and Tierney (1983; 1984) found in their studies of Washington interest groups that all groups had broadened their repertoires of political activities. Of the 27 types of activities surveyed, e.g. presenting evidence before congressional sub-committees, contacting congressional staff, etc., all of the groups they surveyed (sample N=175) indicated that they were engaged in more of these activities in 1980 than they were in 1960. On 18 of the activities, the differences between the two periods were extremely large.

Other evidence indicates that the growth of such organizations has helped fuel the growth of a variety of support organizations and "boundary-spanning elites," offering specialized expertise and resources. Thus, the growth of law firms, consulting agents, sub-contractors for specialty and technical work, pollsters, and media consultants has mushroomed in Washington -- and we suspect in the state capitals -- during the 1960-80 period (Drew, 1983; Sabato, 1981; Rivers, 1982). Both the number of lawyers and their activities changed dramatically in the '70s (see Gallanter, 1983; Abel, 1982). There are more in-house corporation lawyers and they spend more of their time anticipating the effects of government regulation and legislation, for example (Chayes and Chayes, 1984). Richard Viguerie's pioneering work in developing a national mailing list of contributors and supporters of conservative causes suggests that technical change will help to sustain issue groups as an enduring feature of the political landscape (see also Ginsberg, 1984).

4.3 Court Litigation by Collective Actors

Zemans (1983) has recently observed that political scientists and other scholars have neglected a major form of political action: legal mobilization, or use of the courts for political purposes. The accessibility of the courts and

their independence from other branches of government have made this form of political action one that is unique to common-law countries (see Merryman 1969). The courts have also been a major arena of political activity for those groups that have been excluded from other arenas of political participation (see Shienbaum, 1984). These include segments of both the poor and the rich. Both groups because of lack of numbers find that their interests are often best defended in the courts, where numbers don't count.

It is clear that law and the courts have increasingly become the domain of collective actors. Coleman (1982:11) shows that the dominance of corporate actors over "natural persons" in the use of the courts has been a long-term one, starting at the turn of the century. One of the striking changes since the 1950s has been the increasing use of the federal district and appellate courts by collective actors for political purposes (Polsby, 1981-82:564; Clark, 1981).

Most of these suits are brought by interest groups or other collective actors against branches or agencies of the government. In fact, Schlozman and Tierney (1984) found that one of the activities of interest group representatives in Washington that had increased markedly since 1960 was filing or threatening litigation against a government agency.

It has been clear since the historic civil rights cases in the 1950s that the legitimacy of much of state and U.S. government policy is decided by the courts. Clearly, the threat of court action has been a major bargaining tactic of groups in conflict with the government and its agencies. It is difficult to imagine how the consumer movement or the environmental lobbies could have been as successful without recourse to the courts. Furthermore, since the process of implementing legislation carries with it considerable discretion, court action has become an important instrument in reducing the insulation of public bureaucracies charged with implementing laws. Private organizations are affected in this way as well.

Law and legal action become more important as forms of political participation because of the increased "publicness" that we've already discussed. For example, as children's rights are incorporated in the state, more and more family decisions become subject to public scrutiny via legal norms and collective ideologies of "proper parenting." More relationships become contractual in character or have some elements of contract embedded in them. As Weber emphasized, this process is associated with the expansion of bureaucracy both in size and domain: as public and private bureaucracies expand, the domain of law and administrative law expand. Legal rulings thus increasingly become sources of group rights and privileges.

Law, however, also increases in importance as more groups are incorporated in the state and given special status. New opportunities for political action are created. As a result of court rulings in the '60s, for example, that denied that public agencies were the sole representatives of the public interest, legal standing has now been granted to many affected actors (see Woll, 1977:148). Administrative law judges and the federal courts have become as a result important new targets of political opportunity.

Citizenship is increasingly extended to all groups in society and with it comes a variety of legal rights and responsibilities (see Bendix, 1964). Attending school, for example, becomes compulsory for nearly half the population of most societies. The legal rights of citizens and special categories of citizens, e.g. the disabled, veterans, minorities, etc., tend to evolve over time as more of these status categories are created and as social and legal standards change. Equal access to education, for instance, underwent in the 1950s legal redefinition to mean education in a non-(intentionally)-segregated school. The rights of the dying and terminally ill appear to be undergoing a similar change -- with important consequences for such individuals and the medical profession.

One of the best recent examples of court-mediated political incorporation is provided by Orren's (1976) discussion of the legal definition of public standing in disputes. She notes that the U.S. Supreme Court widened this rule in decisions starting in the 1970s, but also left the criteria for deciding who has legal standing vague and ambiguous. As a result, the grounds for determining public standing in litigation -- for giving it to some groups but not to others -- are unclear. The courts, in other words, are in the business of deciding what groups are legitimate public actors, but with no clear and readily justifiable decision-rules. Legal decisions of this character affect the right of public interest groups to bring class action suits and to otherwise act as guardians of the public interest. In addition, much status group competition in the economy now occurs in legal centers over school policy, licensing, professional regulation, and occupational selection (Collins, 1979).

The expansion of the fragmented state in the U.S. guarantees that litigation by collective actors will remain an important form of political participation.*

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* Such court action is less well established in the Western European civil law countries. Although the courts are becoming more independent (Merryman, 1969), they are locked into systems and traditions in which legislatures or executives are institutionally dominant.

4.4 Lobbying and Administrative Negotiation

Legislatures and administrative agencies are two increasingly important arenas in which functional representation is necessary for collective actors. The former allocate public authority and rights and the latter are in charge of implementing such empowerments. This is a two step process -- with substantial independence of each stage. Thus collective actors have two major opportunities for intervention.

Lobbying appears to be more important in the U.S. than in more corporatist regimes (e.g. Scandinavia, Austria) where peak associations are frequently involved in direct governmental decision-making. In the absence of such forums for institutionalized participation, private actors in the U.S. attempt to influence their environments by persuading legislators and legislative committees of the legitimacy of their policy views.

Recent evidence indicates that lobbying and associated activities have increased considerably since 1960, as more public authority and public issues have been created. Schlozman and Tierney (1983; 1984) document the marked increase in all forms of legislative and administrative lobbying and contacting by Washington-based interest group representatives. Fiorina (1977) argues a similar point. According to him, congressmen since the '60s have been providing more constituency service and have been using their enlarged staffs for this purpose. Congressmen in Fiorina's view are willing partners in the lobbying process, because such activity helps ensure reelection (see also Drew, 1983).

Lobbying takes a variety of forms. In part it involves achieving access to important legislators through campaign donations (see Drew, 1983; Andreas, 1985). It includes efforts to influence the composition of regulatory agencies through presidential lobbying (apparently one of the purposes of the disproportionately high levels of secret campaign gifts that concentrated industries made to the 1972 Nixon re-election committee [Pittman, 1977]). It also includes testimony before legislative committees and providing information to these committees and individual legislators (Schlozman and Tierney, 1983; 1984). It involves industry efforts to develop alliances and interchanges of personnel and information with state and federal regulatory agencies. On all these counts there appears to be increased activity by corporate actors.

As many have pointed out, the implementation of legislation by public agencies involves large amounts of discretionary authority, concerning the interpretation of

legislation and the application of rules to specific cases (see Bardach and Kagan, 1982). As government intervention in the economy and other institutional areas increases, negotiation with administrative agencies over their legal interpretations and implementation strategies becomes an especially important form of political participation. Such activity has undoubtedly increased since the 1960s. Observers of congress report that congressmen spend a great deal of time contacting public agencies on behalf of constituents (Fiorina, 1977; Mayhew, 1974). Walker's (1983) evidence, previously discussed, of the march to Washington of interest groups provides direct evidence of this trend, since a major function of such representatives is contacting relevant government agencies and commissions. (Schlozman and Tierney [1984:tables 1, 2] also document this trend. In addition, they find that a majority of such groups represent business and professional occupations.)

The four forms of collective action we have featured represent increasingly prominent forms of participation in the polity, and occupy more central positions in the repertoires of citizens. They have emerged, diffused and gained prominence in response to the new opportunities and constraints presented by a changed institutional context. Tied to these repertoire shifts is significant change in the character of political legitimation, discussed in the next (and final) section.

6. Conclusion: Participation and Legitimation in a Changed Polity

The high visibility and apparent magnitudes of shifts in citizen political activities and orientations -- the dropoff in voting involvement, the rise of protest and social movement politics, the "confidence gap" -- have stimulated much debate over "legitimation crisis" and "ungovernability." The articulation of civic and claimant cultures generates new sources of tension and cleavage, and thus makes new kinds of "legitimation problems" possible. Less attended to is the possibility that claimant politics can produce new sources and forms of political legitimation.

Return first to some of the apparent attitudinal changes reviewed in previous sections. Recall, for example, that analysts, in addition to detecting a confidence gap, have reported evidence of increases in: perceived political efficacy (of a certain type); political information; mobilizational propensities and skills, including greater acceptance (eg) of protests and protestors (Barnes and Kaase, 1979; Kaase, 1984); as well as substantial satisfaction with welfare programs and benefits, and with Congressmen as service providers. Our question becomes: how should we make sense of the combination of such putative increases, and of sustained pride in the nation and form of government, with low confidence and much skepticism about politicians, "politics," "bureaucracy," "big government"?

"Legitimacy." Before probing states of legitimacy, one needs to assess whether "legitimacy" represents a construct that offers much analytical purchase. Weber scholars tell us that Weber never discussed legitimacy in a particularly coherent way (Bensman, 197#); and one excellent survey of contemporary discussions chronicles much conceptual sloppiness (Mayntz, 1975; see also Hyde, 1983 and Stinchcombe, 1968:4.2). To be clearer in such discussion, one needs, at a minimum, to distinguish and pursue different possible states of legitimation, and (a la Easton, 1965) different political objects or referents of legitimacy.

Legitimacy most commonly refers to the degree to which the organizing principles of a collectivity are endorsed as being the most acceptable ones among a set of alternatives. Such endorsement presumably is associated with a normatively motivated willingness to comply with social regulations and directives (Mayntz, 1975). But note, secondly, that one might alternatively think (as analysts often do) of a polity

as highly legitimate if its members accept the operative principles of the polity as highly institutionalized and constraining, whether or not they endorse such principles. Thus legitimation can refer to the extent to which members of a collectivity validate that collectivity as binding upon them.* If individuals consciously validate a collectivity without endorsing it, such validation may be associated with a pragmatically motivated and conditional willingness to comply with social regulations and directives (rather than normatively-driven compliance).

One might think of a maximally legitimated polity as one in which members do not and can not imagine any alternative to its organization and principles. In such a condition, members would thus implicitly validate the system as binding upon them, and would not even initiate the comparative questioning that is necessary for the possibility of "endorsement" to arise. For in order for a polity to become "delegitimated," members must be able to invoke principles or models external to the practices of their polity; such external principles can be social ones, drawn from other polities known to members, or from counterfactual constructs; or transcendental ones, drawn from symbolic images of spiritual or cosmic organization. Debate or conflict over alternative organizational or moral realities provides the means of delegitimation; delegitimation of one system requires legitimation of an alternative design (see Mann, 1973, for comment to this effect, drawn from the historical experience of the modern West and from reflection upon the "dual power" features of revolutionary situations; see also Kaase, 1980).

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* We borrow, and adapt, this language from Zelditch, Harris, Thomas, and Walker, 1983, who in turn borrowed and adapted it from Dornbusch and Scott, 1975. We are dependent throughout this section on synthetic work produced by Zelditch and his colleagues on legitimation; upon discussions in the Stanford seminar on legitimation, 1984-85; and upon Mayntz (1975) and Olson (1983).

Note that "validation" can exist in two quite different forms. Individuals may quite consciously accept institutions as binding upon them -- "validating" a collectivity, for example, by recognizing and accepting that empowered elites endorse its organization. (For the time being we label this process "explicit" validation.) Alternatively, individuals may implicitly validate a system by taking its organization for granted, without any or much reflection, treating it ("reifying" it) as if it were part of the physical environment. Berger and Luckmann represent legitimation primarily in this second way (1966). Obviously these two forms of validation are ideal types; their real-world analogues coexist and inter-relate in a number of different ways.

Members of a collectivity need not accept or reject the polity en toto. On this point, we think that recent discussions of "legitimation problems" and "ungovernability" have been careless. Easton usefully distinguished between governmental "incumbents," "regime," and "political community" as three separate objects of political support or criticism. We think it is helpful to develop this list still further, in order to distinguish between six referents:

* present administrative incumbents
* present administrative performance
* governmental (or political system's) general performance and capabilities
* the "constitutional order": doctrinal principles of polity; institutional design of the polity
* the socio-economic or politico-economic system
* the nation-state (national "political community")

While we do think consideration of a ramified list such as this one is important for probing legitimation, we will for the remainder of this section use a reduced version and talk primarily about legitimacy of governmental regimes, the state, and the national polity.

Legitimacy trends. The above list encourages attention to different historical processes that affect the character of legitimation and have the effect of reducing the legitimacy of some of political objects, while heightening that of others. We first note trends that have reduced the legitimacy of electoral politics, and of political regimes (ie, impressions of present incumbents and of governmental performance and capabilities).

The long-term expansion of rights claims, and the allied politicization of social affairs, promote a political "secularization" in the electorate (Mayntz, 1975). As in religion, this process does not constitute straightforward delegitimation, but rather means that confidence and support becomes more conditional and issue or domain specific. Such political secularization is sustained by expanded educational participation, which encourages critical attitudes toward "politics" as a means of social coordination (Ellul, 1964) and sensitizes individuals to perceptions and rhetorics of injustice and relative deprivation.

Competitive mobilization and "secularization" operate with a pincer effect: more and more actors achieve formal or informal standing in decision domains; citizens have

greater expectations for governmental services and benefits, but are also less willing to provide diffuse support. Participation in an advanced capitalist economy is itself a political socialization experience, encouraging individuals and groups to exploit resource or positional advantages to the fullest (Goldthorpe, 1978) and promoting "interest group liberalism" as a political justification of such activity (Lowi, 1979). Once rights become institutionalized, regimes do not necessarily receive credit for their continued availability. The welfare state regimes thus become "victims of their own success" (Logue, 1979), with often-mentioned patterns of "overload" and "zero-sum politics" afflicting them. Regimes are often ill-equipped to deal with such pressures. Party alignments lag behind changes in issue conflicts (Inglehart, 1983), for example. Welfare states are often accompanied by electorally weak regimes, as we've discussed (ie, weak parliamentary backing for executive governments [Janowitz, 1976]). This weakness impairs political integration and responsiveness.

In the U.S. this regime weakness is aggravated by the fragmented centralization we've also called attention to. This process promotes policy-making complexity and thwarts policy-making consensus and closure. Political leadership can appear ineffectual, and fail to generate public confidence (Heclo, 1978).

For all of these reasons, the legitimacy of political <u>regimes</u> suffers.

But political secularization and competitive mobilization operate in another fashion. While increasingly prone to criticize administrations and to find governmental incapacities or failures, citizens also validate the <u>state</u> by expecting greater public involvement in private problems and by envisaging a particularly prominent public role for the central government to play. While regimes may lose legitimacy, the "state" may gain legitimacy as a social actor.

<u>Public political discourse</u> provides indications of the enhanced validation of the state and the continued validation and endorsement of the broader polity. Accounts of and rhetoric about social problems and solutions have become more collective in nature, featuring new "generative metaphors" (Schon, 1979) that depict organizations, groups, "Washington," or "the system" as both sources and hindrances of (eg) social progress. Long-standing dramas of governmental reorganization, for example, are energized by metaphors of collective efficacy but accompanied by images of realpolitik, readily invoked to explain why reorganization efforts fail (March and Olson, 1983). Citizen images of social affairs reveal more collectivized imagery: images of properly socialized, rational individuals making free choices between good and evil, as

producers of the social order, lose centrality (Glock, 1976). Several rhetorical systems coexist, in a competitive tension: individuals invoke both the language and norms of both civic and claimant cultures.

The standards implicit in the language of citizen criticism of regimes and governmental performance invoke the traditional norms and principles of the democratic polity and a capitalist economy (McCloskey and Zaller, 1984). Criticisms of government reveal great expectations of state rationality and purposiveness, with departures judged against a baseline of an almost transcendental rationality of individual choice and calculation (an imagery enshrined in and propagated by such "public choice" and microeconomic theory). Oppositional voices in the polity employ the language of democratic citizenship, participation, and rights; thus endorsing fundamentals of the institutional and politico-economic order. Citizen and oppositional criticism reveals little evidence of any probing for alternative principles or models for political or socio-economic organization, a testament to great validation (and often high endorsement) of the extant national politico-economic order.

The reigning world models of proper political organization also feature democratization, rights, and citizen engagement (see Meyer, 1980), a major legitimation resource for the U.S. state. U.S. citizens attribute to their country high standing with respect to these world norms, helping to account for the distinctiveness of U.S. responses in world opinion surveys: eg, in the recently completed World Values survey, U.S. responses show (not surprisingly) lowest support for "revolutionary change" as a source of solutions to social problems, and the highest voiced willingness to provide "valiant support," presumably military, for one's country. Exploration of the political and economic imagery of U.S. citizens suggests that they do not readily distinguish between the U.S. economy and U.S. polity, and thus in moments of assessment of the U.S. system they imagine an undifferentiated private enterprise-cum-democracy (see Lipset and Schneider, 1983; Varenne, 197#; McCloskey and Zaller, 1984). Thus the governmental system benefits from the "American dream" and cargo-cult aura surrounding the U.S. economy. Moreover, the extraordinary reduction of international insularity and marked increase in perception of international competitiveness and geopolitical threat experienced by the U.S. citizenry in the post-war period has undoubtedly heightened feelings of dependence on the U.S. nation-state, now depicted as itself a collective organization, and has fed an aggressive patriotism (see, generally, Gellner, 1983).

At the individual level, the depictions and accounts we stress have substantial independence from the actual experience individuals have with social and governmental

institutions. (The ways in which individuals sample from collectively prominent themes to establish their own idiosyncratic repertoires of accounts are not well understood.) At the collective level, social metaphors and accounts seem to be only loosely tied to operative institutional features, just as much symbolism and imagery in organizational settings is detached from actual structure and activities (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). In addition, collective accounts may embody endogenous evolutionary trends independent of institutional change (consider Habermas, 1979, for a speculative but provocative argument to this effect). The dissonance between civic and claimant images, for example, produces instability in political imagery, driving ongoing modification in and new articulations of accounts. With such detachment from institutional structure, and with such embedded tensions, changes in predominant social depictions can lead as well as lag institutional changes -- changes in gender conceptions, for example, driving changes in gender practices and subsequently inducing institutional shifts.

Legitimacy and Stability. In a context in which the "legitimacy" of certain features of the polity is heightened, while that of others is reduced, and in which a pronounced duality of political rhetorics and accounts obtains, the causal connections between legitimacy "political stability" become highly mediated and thus highly contextual. Most current discussion of legitimacy and stability has probably been insufficiently cautious, as well as too prone to accept the traditional and highly problematic identification of high stability with high legitimacy found in general social theory (and the extraordinary vagueness about the meaning of "stability"). We expect that no general conclusions are possible without undertaking an elaborate specification of forms of stability and instability and the interactions between them -- a task we will certainly not undertake here (for one typology that begins to suggest the difficulties, see Cohen, 1968:Ch. 2).

We will limit ourselves to underscoring one or two points. The expanded state has provided collective goods that undoubtedly have been instrumental in supporting "stability." But it may also be "too big for the small problems and too small for the big problems" (Bell, 1978), heightening both citizen expectations and frustrations. In such states, the major threats to stability would seem to stem from political or economic "shocks" that find government either unprepared or incapable.

The effects of legitmacy trends on stability seem indeterminate. Mayntz is helpful when she suggests that the contemporary western polities may have experienced a shift in the bases of legitimacy (Mayntz, 1975) -- in the language we've used here, perhaps reduced diffuse endorsement, and increasing instrumental and conditional validation of social

directives. In this case, "political stability" would be increasingly dependent on pragmatic compliance rather than more general support. Both the decreased "legitimacy" of regimes, associated with the greater electoral instability and regime turnover of politicized welfare states, and the increased "legitimacy" of expanded states as collective actors, increase the constraints and demands on regimes. These processes reduce governmental capacities for organizing collective action, further eroding endorsement of regimes and impressions of governmental capability. Claimant politics, expected and validated by the citizenry, compromises the infrastructure of "trust" of a civic culture (Fox, 1974; Goldthorpe, 1984). "Social problems" are increasingly collective ones, and citizens do more readily anticipate collective resolutions. But they simultaneously stand empowered to reject such efforts, in the rhetoric of the civic culture, if collective means appear to compromise their particularistic interests. These are "cultural contradictions" of a changed polity.